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ENCHIRIDION CLERICORUM:

BEING A

Rule of Life for Ecclesiastics

AS TO THEIR

PRINCIPAL OBLIGATIONS IN REFERENCE TO THEIR SACRED MINISTRY
AND THEIR OWN SANCTIFICATION,

AS ALSO THEIR INTERCOURSE WITH THE WORLD,

INCLUDING

AN EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE FOR RETREATS.

With an Appendix,

TO SERVE AS

A GUIDE TO THE "PROGRAMMES OF SERMONS AND INSTRUCTIONS,"

AS TO THE USE THAT MAY BE MADE OF THEM IN CONNECTION WITH

The Gospels of the Sundays and Festivals of the Year as they occur.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"PROGRAMMES OF SERMONS AND INSTRUCTIONS,"

ETC.

THIS WORK BEING INTENDED FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF ECCLESIASTICS, IT WILL BE
SUPPLIED ONLY ON THE APPLICATION OF A CLERGYMAN IN EACH INSTANCE.

BROWNE & NOLAN,

NASSAU STREET, DUBLIN,

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A P P R O B A T I O N
OF HIS EMINENCE
THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

4, RUTLAND-SQUARE, EAST,
DUBLIN, *July, 1882.*

WE feel great pleasure in recommending to the Clergy of this Diocese the "ENCHIRIDION CLERICORUM," published by Messrs. Browne & Nolan.

It is, in truth, what it purports to be, a hand stretched forth to lead the Junior Clergy unharmed through the many dangers which beset their first entrance on the work of the Sacred Ministry.

The young Priest who, in simple faith, follows the experienced guide who speaks to him through this book, will escape the perils through which he must pass, and will be saved from numerous temptations to which his inexperience, and even the kindliness of his own disposition, must expose him, if not warned in time.

And whilst the young Priest will find in this little work words of wisest counsel for his opening life, those who are growing grey in the Sanctuary may discern matter for serious reflection in its pages.

A voice will go forth from the "ENCHIRIDION" asking the momentous question, How has my life corresponded with the generous promises I made to God on the day of my ordination to the Priesthood?

The learned author does not draw his wise counsels merely from books; a long life devoted to the duties of his holy calling, and great experience of men, and of the special difficulties which must be faced by the Irish Missionary Priest, qualify him to speak to his brother Priest, "as one having authority."

Convinced, therefore, that the "ENCHIRIDION" will do great service to the cause of Religion in largely contributing to the sanctification of her Ministers, WE wish for it the largest possible circulation amongst the Clergy of Dublin.

✠ EDWARD CARD. MACCABE,
Archbishop of Dublin, Primate of Ireland.



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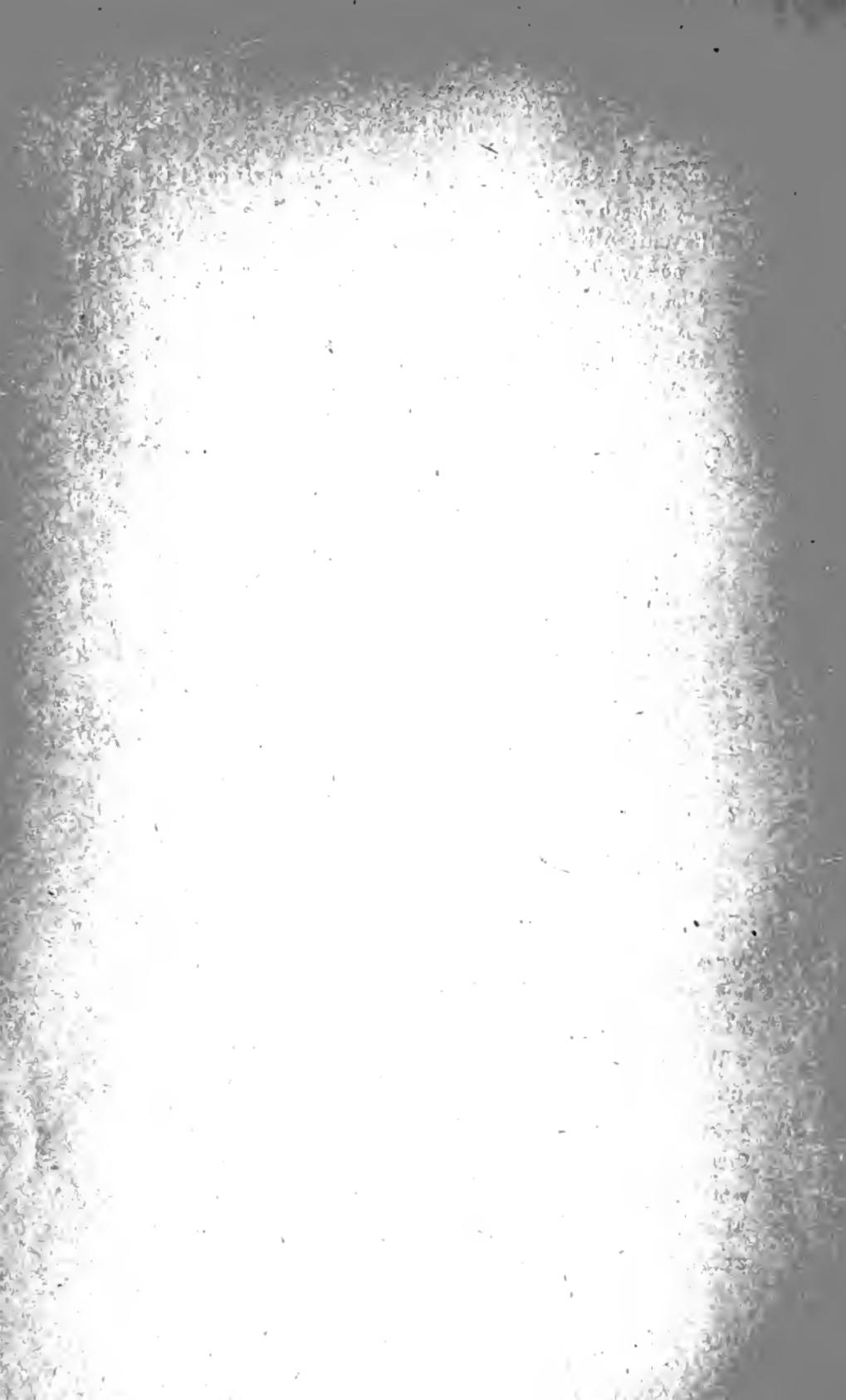
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P R E F A C E.

THIS little Work, as its title indicates, is intended for the exclusive use of Ecclesiastics, in the humble hope that they may, with God's blessing, derive advantage from the perusal and study of its contents.

Although I have endeavoured, as far as I have been able, to make it suitable to every age, I confess I have had especially in view the young Ecclesiastic, who has just finished his seminary career and is entering on his Sacred Ministry. The Holy Ghost has declared of young men in general, that "*It is a proverb : a young man according to his way, even when he is old, he will not depart from it*" (*Proverbs xxii. 6*). This oracle of Divine wisdom is particularly applicable to the young Ecclesiastic, and constant experience gives us to see that his whole life, as a general rule, depends upon the manner in which he spends the first few years of his sacerdotal career. If he has gone on well during these few years, he will in all likelihood persevere as he has begun ; whilst, on the contrary, if he allow himself to go astray, he will experience great difficulty in recovering himself to enter upon a course of life in harmony with his high and holy vocation. I, therefore, endeavour in the following pages to take him by the hand on the threshold of the Seminary, where he has made his studies, and lead him into his Sacred Ministry, by putting before him a Rule of Life for his guidance, pointing out to him how he may "*present himself*

approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly handling the Word of Truth" (2 Tim. ii. 15).

I preface this Rule by some considerations showing what a Priest, in the first place, ought to be, and secondly, by way of contrast, what he ought not to be, in the hope that, impressing these considerations deeply on his mind, he may see all the more the necessity of regulating his life in accordance with the prescriptions I venture to submit for his adoption on the very outset of his Sacred Ministry.

The Rule of Life is followed by an examination of Conscience adapted to a Retreat, as it may be hoped, that if he enter into himself thoroughly during "*these days of salvation*," and bring himself to an account before God, he will see what he has to correct, and what he has to amend, and thereby repair the deviations he may find he has yielded to contrary to his Rule, which, profiting of the grace of his Retreat, he will undertake to observe with greater fidelity and renewed fervour.

This examination of Conscience will be found to be very comprehensive, as I take account of the duties of a Priest in every position of the Sacred Ministry, so as to make the examination as generally useful as possible.

The fruit of a Retreat is comprised in the resolutions one makes under the inspiration of Divine grace during the holy exercises: I therefore subjoin some observations on this subject, to which I append certain admonitions of St. Charles Borromeo to his clergy of Milan, which, at the same time that they are very instructive, suggest matter for resolutions to be adopted in a Retreat with a view to an amendment of life for the future.

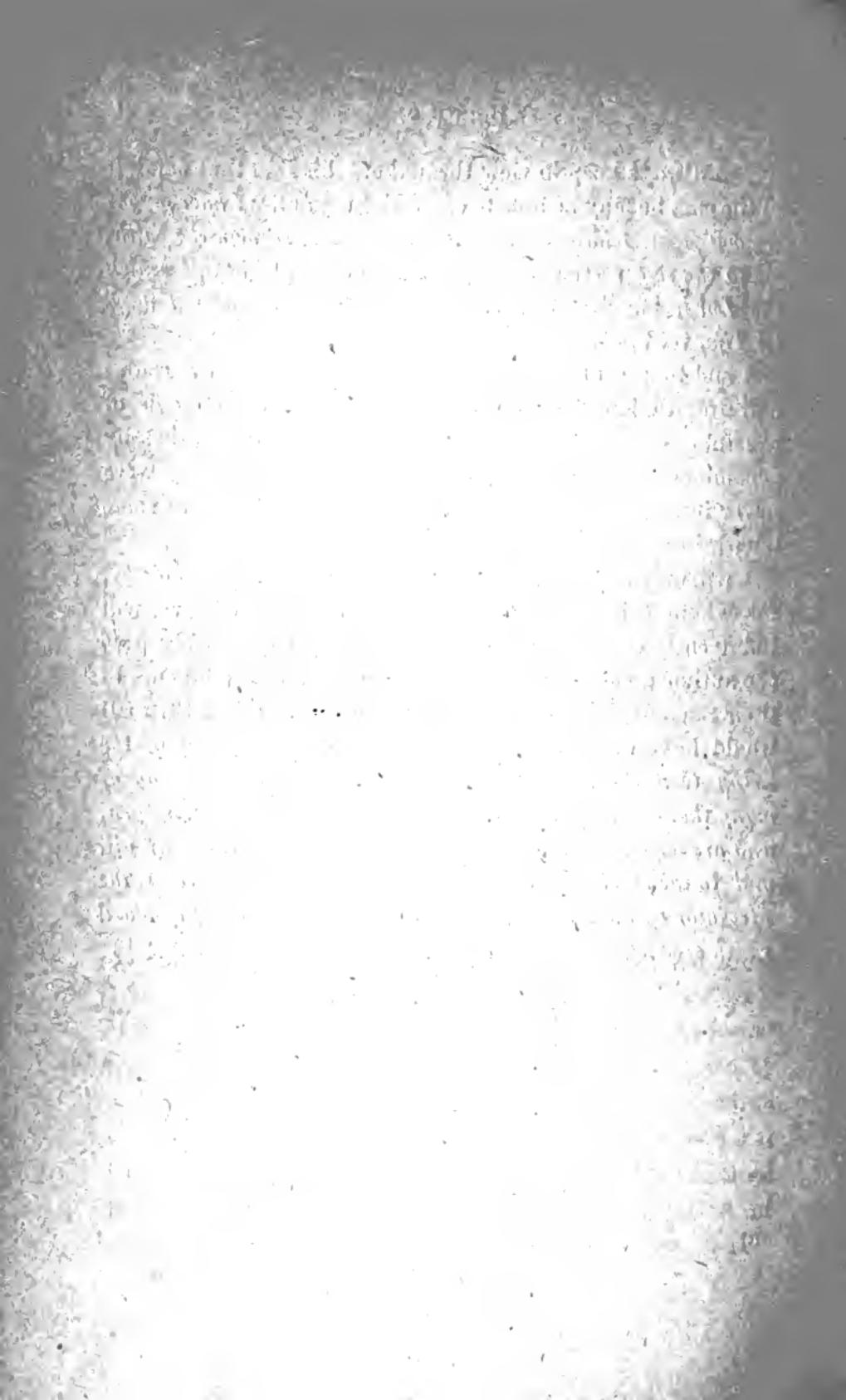
As a further Appendix I set down five points summing up, as if in a synoptical view, certain great truths a Priest

should always keep in view throughout his life, that coming to the end, he may be able to say with St. Paul, "*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me in that day*" (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8).

I end by a GUIDE adapting the "Programmes of Sermons and Instructions," which I have written, to the Gospels of the Sundays and Festivals of the year, as they occur, thereby accommodating them to Homily-Preaching, which they were never intended to displace or disparage, as I explain at some length in a few prefatory remarks.

I will only add a request, that my brethren in the Ministry, for whom I have undertaken this little labour of love, will indulgently overlook its shortcomings, and charitably give the author a share in their pious prayers, and the labours of their Sacred Ministry, that we may all "*come,*" as St. Paul would have us hope, "*to Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels, and to the church of the first-born, who are written in the heavens, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the just made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Testament, and to the sprinkling of blood which speaketh better than that of Abel*" (Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24).

AMEN. AMEN. AMEN.





ENCHIRIDION CLERICORUM

A PRIEST—WHAT HE OUGHT TO BE.

“Sic nos existimet homo ut ministros Christi, et dispensatores mysteriorum Dei” (1 COR. iv. 1).

IT is a principle universally admitted, that every one should regulate his manners and shape his conduct according to his state of life, it being understood by all means, that he occupies a proper and becoming state. Hence, the education of youth has always in view the profession or position, a young man has before him in life, and when he attains it, he is thought well or ill of, according as his conduct and manners are, or are not, in conformity with it.

This principle is especially insisted upon where religious motive and obligation should be the main-spring of life. Hence St. Paul, writing to the Ephesians from his prison in Rome, addressed them as follows : “*I, therefore, a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called*” (*Ephes. iv.*), and he inculcates the same lesson in several other places of his writings. Here, therefore, is a rule for the special guidance of the Ecclesiastic, that, looking to the high and holy profession he has embraced, he would, in all regards, live in a manner suitable to it. “*It is right,*” says St. Ambrose, “*that the Sacerdotal*

dignity be first understood by us, and then maintained, that we may be able to repel the accusation of the Psalmist, “*man, when he was in honour, did not understand; he is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them*” (*Ps. xlviii. 13*). (*Lib. de dignit. Sacerd. cap. 2*). Consequently, as Moses was commanded of old, respecting the tabernacle, “*to look and make it according to the pattern that was shown him on the mount*” (*Exod. xxv. 40*), so should the Priest of God have constantly before his eyes the dignity with which he is invested, and the office he holds as “*minister of Christ, and dispenser of the mysteries of God*” (*1 Cor. iv. 1*), that he may see therein the pattern he is to imitate, in constructing his plan of life, and forming his manners. To this he is exhorted by the Council of Trent, where, in most distinct words, the Fathers of that Venerable Assembly say in their 22nd Session, *de Reform.* “*Quapropter sic decet omnino clericos in sortem Domini vocatos vitam, moresque suos omnes componere, ut habitu, gestu, incessu, sermone, aliisque omnibus rebus, nil nisi grave, moderatum, ac religione plenum prae se ferant; levia etiam delicta, quae in ipsis maxima essent, effugiant, ut eorum actiones cunctis afferant venerationem.*”

Let us, therefore, lift up our eyes on high, and with the Prophet Micheas, “*go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob: and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths*” (*Mich. iv. 2*). Yes, it is in that high supernatural region, enlightened by the light of Divine Faith, we shall find the pattern-Priest. We shall see him in a three-

fold relation : 1st, in reference to his sacred ministry at large ; 2ndly, in reference to the ministry of the Altar ; and 3rdly, in reference to the ministry of the holy tribunal of Penance. God having called his servant to the dignity of the Priesthood, bestows upon him the grace of State, as it is called, that he may be fit “*to present himself*” in the sight of heaven, and before mankind, “*approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth*” (*2 Tim. ii. 15*).

A PRIEST IN REFERENCE TO HIS MINISTRY AT LARGE.

St. Paul, writing to the Romans, teaches us, that from our acquaintance with material and visible things we come to form our ideas of things that are invisible and supernatural. The transition from one order to the other is sometimes effected by comparisons or analogies, and sometimes by contrasts and antitheses. It is in this latter way the Apostle would teach us the inestimable happiness we possess in the faith and religion of Christ, contrasting it with the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world, all which “*he counts to be but loss, for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ . . . and as dung, that he may gain Christ*” (*Phil. iii. 8*).

In the same way the holy Fathers of the Church would give us some idea of our dignity “*as ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God*” (*1 Cor. iv. 1*). They would put it in contrast with the highest dignities that dazzle the eyes of men here on earth, which they pronounce beneath contempt, as they cast their eyes from one to the other. “*Speak not to me,*” says the

great St. Chrysostom, “of the purple, of a diadem, or gold-embroidered garments. These are but shadows in my eyes. The Priesthood is more venerable and greater than any regal grandeur or magnificence. For the Priest occupies a middle place between God, on one side, and human nature, on the other, receiving for us the blessings and favours coming down from the throne of the Most High, and presenting our petitions before the throne of mercy.” *Hom. V. in illud Isaiae (in anno quo mortuus est rex Ozias.)*

So, also, would St. Clement say to us, that “our Priesthood is as far above the splendour of Kingly state, as the soul is more excellent than the body” (*Constit. Apostol. L. ii. c. 34*).

St. Ambrose presents to us the same sort of contrast. “As lead,” observes the venerable Doctor, “is inferior to gold, so is the dignity of Kings yet more despicable when put side by side with the dignity of the Priest of God” (*de dignit. Sacerd. C. ii. dist. 36*).

St. Bernard, in the same view, says: “God has placed you, Priests, above Kings and Emperors” (*ad Past. in Syn*).

These declarations of the Fathers of the Church of God place before us as their combined and unanimous teaching, that as soul is above body, and as the things of heaven are above the things of earth, so the dignity and excellence of the Priesthood transcend all that is great and grand, all that is admired and sought after, in the highest positions among mankind in this world.

But St. Chrysostom would enter into the subject by itself, and apart from all comparisons or contrasts. “Sacerdotium,” he says, “in terris quidem peragitur, sed

in rerum caelestium classem ordinemque referendum est” (*L. iii. c. 3*). Our Priestly office we do, indeed, discharge here on earth, but it is to be placed in the category and rank of things heavenly. Thus does this great Light of the Church of God translate us from earth to heaven in imagination, in order to realise our true position and dignity. And now that we are with him in the court of God, what place does he assign us there? Amongst the Angels, is it? Higher still; yes, higher. Amongst Archangels? Higher even still; yes, higher than Angels or Archangels, for in absolute terms, without figure, or effort of imagination, the holy Doctor says, “*Iis (Sacerdotibus) datum est ut habeant potestatem, quam Deus optimus neque Angelis neque Archangelis datam esse voluit*” (*ibid.*) What a thought! How transporting the idea! We lift up our minds on high, and we look with amazement at the troops of celestial spirits, who, in their thousands upon thousands, minister “*to the King of Ages, immortal and invisible*” (*1 Tim. i. 17*), and we believe, because we are bound to believe, that our ministry and office as Priests of God place us above these sublime princes of the court of heaven.

We are therefore prepared to hear St. Dionysius, as he affirms, that the dignity of a Priest is more than angelic—that it is even divine, “*Angelica, imo divina est*” (*Caelest. Hierarch., c. 3*).

And St. Ephrem, lost in thought, tries to express himself by saying, “*Excedit omnem cogitationem donum dignitatis sacerdotalis;*” whilst Cassian, in view of this inconceivable dignity of the Priesthood, exclaims, “*O Sacerdos Dei, si altitudinem caeli contempleris,*

altior es, si dominorum sublimitatem, sublimior es, soli Deo, et Creatori tuo inferior es."

But, would it occur to us, that this language of the Saints of God is exaggerated or overcharged? Let us examine for a moment, and we shall find it strictly true and correct in its simple and literal acceptation. Does not St. Paul tell us we are the Delegates, the Vicegerents of Jesus Christ? Does he not say in precise terms, "*Pro Christo legatione fungimur?*" (2 Cor. v. 20). And what is the commission Christ has confided to us? He Himself declares it in saying, "*Data est mihi omnis potestas in cælo et in terra*" (Matt. xxviii. 18); in virtue of which unlimited power, He says further, "*Sicut misit me Pater, ego mitto vos*" (Joan xx. 21)—as much as to say, I am about leaving this world, but I leave you after Me to continue My work, the mission I have received from My Father. Have no doubt on the subject, for all power in heaven and on earth is given to Me to this effect. It is for this purpose I have chosen you from amongst mankind, "*for you have not chosen Me; but I have chosen you, and have appointed you, that you should go, and should bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain*" (John xv. 16). "*Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world*" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20). Behold our commission. We are identified by it with Jesus Christ Himself. Our ministry is His ministry, which he delegates to us. Our Priesthood is His Priest-

hood by the participation He affords us in it. For we must bear in mind, that in the Christian dispensation there is but one Priesthood, the single Priesthood of Jesus Christ, which He exercises in us, and we in Him. It is on this principle we solve the difficulties presented in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews, where the Apostle contrasts the “*plures sacerdotes*” of the old law with Him “*who is Priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech*” (*Heb. vii. 17*); and it is on the same principle that St. Augustine employs the illustration which clears up the subject so completely, saying, “Peter baptizes, Christ baptizes, Paul baptizes, Christ baptizes.” And so fixed and stable is this identity, that no wickedness on our part can destroy it, not even the crime of Judas, for the Saint immediately adds, “Judas baptizes, Christ baptizes” (*Tract. in Joan.*)

Now, going back on our principle, that it is in the character of his profession we are to find the model-Priest according to the law of suitability, and still more in virtue of his vocation, whence we have a right to infer that God, who has called him to the sacred ministry, has also given him gifts and graces in accordance with its dignity, we arrive at a just notion of the pattern he should present to us as “*a minister of Christ and dispenser of the mysteries of God.*”

His ministry is not of this world—it is not of earth, earthly. It is, on the contrary, of heaven, heavenly, transcending even the power and dignity of the Angels and Archangels. Consequently, the Priest of God is not a man of this world according to his sacred ministry. Our Saviour has declared it in express terms, saying,

“ You are not of the world. I have chosen you out of the world” (*John xv. 19*). And in His prayer to His Eternal Father He says, *“they are not of the world; as I also am not of the world”* (*John xvii. 16*). It follows, therefore, that the thoughts and affections of the Priest of God should be above this world, tending constantly to heaven, and engaged about the things of heaven, by the exercise of the heavenly virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity. *“ The just man,”* as St. Paul so frequently inculcates, *“ liveth by Faith”* (*Rom. i. 17, Heb. x. 38, Gal. iii. 11*). With the eyes of Faith he should penetrate beyond what is external in the mysteries he dispenses, to recognise their interior virtue and efficacy according to their divine institution. By Hope, *“as an anchor of the soul, sure and firm, he should enter in even within the veil, where the forerunner Jesus is entered for us, made a High Priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech”* (*Heb. vi. 19, 20*). And as for Charity—he should be *“rooted and founded”* in this Divine virtue, *“to be able to comprehend, with all the Saints, what is the breadth, and height, and depth, to know the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge”* (*Ephes. iii. 17, 18, 19*). In a word, *“his conversation,”* as St. Paul requires, *“should be in heaven”* (*Philip, iii. 20*) ; that is, his manner of life should be in every way holy.

This holiness of life God required even of the Priests and Levites of the Old Law. The command is repeated again and again in Leviticus and elsewhere, *“I am the Lord, your God; be ye holy, because I am holy”* (*Levit. xi. 44, xix. 2*), and *“you shall be holy, because I am*

holy" (*Levit. xi. 46*) ; and again, "*Sanctify yourselves, and be ye holy, because I am the Lord your God*" (*Levit. xx. 7*). So also in Exodus does He require under pain of death, "*the Priests also that come to the Lord, let them be sanctified, lest He strike them*" (*Exod. xix. 22*). These are God's commands to the Priests and Levites of the Old Law. Do they regard the Priests of the New Law? They do, undoubtedly, and with still greater force of obligation. For, are we not to reason and say, if the Priests of the Old Law, that law which, as St. Paul affirms, brought nothing to perfection—if the Priests of the "*infirma et egena elementa*" which, at best, were but the emblems and figures of things to come—if the Priests of that law, which "*was set aside because of the weakness and the unsuitableness thereof*," according to the words of the Apostle (*Heb. vii. 18*)—if these Priests were required to be holy, what holiness is not required in the Priests of the New Law, which gives reality to the figures and substance to the shadows of the Mosaic dispensation! Alas! alas! if the words of St. Ambrose should come to be realized in them—"honor sublimis, et vita deformis; deifica professio, et illicita actio" (*de dignit. Sacerdot, cap. ii.*) What an anomaly! how dreadful the contrast!

But have we not seen that the Priest of the New Law is the Minister of Christ, the Vicegerent and Ambassador of Christ, with graces and prerogatives to continue amongst mankind the mission, which the Son of God received from His eternal Father on coming into this world? Have we not seen that the Priesthood of the New Law is a participation of the Priesthood of Jesus

Christ, whereby He is a Priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech? Must we not, therefore, ask with the Apostle, “*What participation hath justice with injustice? Or what fellowship hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial?*” (2 Cor. vi. 14, 15). No, it must be as Christ Himself has ordained. “*They are not of the world,*” says He to His eternal Father, “*as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in truth. Thy Word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for them do I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth*” (John xvii. 16, 17, 18, 19). Here is the rule and ordinance. The great High Priest sanctified Himself, that His Priests also may be sanctified, so that being partakers of His eternal Priesthood they should also partake of His essential sanctity. Therefore, we are conducted to the conclusion, that our Blessed Lord Himself is the great model, on which His minister is to mould his life and shape his manners. Hence the beloved disciple St. John insists, that “*he that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also to walk, even as He walked*” (1 John ii. 6). Hence, also, St. Paul presented himself to the Corinthians as a follower of Christ, and on that ground claimed to be followed by them, saying “*Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ*” (1 Cor. xi. 1). But why quote the Apostles, when we have the words of our Divine Saviour to establish the rule? Yes, they are His ever blessed words, “*I have given you an example, that, as I have done to you, so you do also*” (John xiii. 15). This is the rule all apostolic men have ever followed, considering themselves worthy of the

ministry of Christ only as they imitated His blessed example. In this imitation they set no bounds to their endeavours, their maxim being, “*he that is just, let him be justified still: and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still*” (*Apoc. xxii. 11*), that they might render themselves worthy ministers of the Great High Priest, “*holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens*” (*Heb. vii. 26*).

Thus do we find in the character of the Priesthood, and in its identity with the eternal Priesthood of Christ, the true ideal, or type-form of a worthy minister of Christ, and dispenser of the mysteries of God.

A PRIEST IN REFERENCE TO THE MINISTRY OF THE ALTAR.

Having considered a Priest in reference to his ministry generally, and having seen in these considerations what the holiness of his life should be, we proceed to consider him in reference to his special ministry at the Altar, with a view to the same conclusion. We now enter the Sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, and with due reverence we bring before our minds the “*Mystery of Faith*” the Priest of God has there to perform. Well may we say in the words of the Patriarch Jacob, “*How terrible is this place! This is no other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven*” (*Gen. xxviii. 17*).

Our first reflection will be, that the function of the Christian Altar constitutes pre-eminently the office of the Priest of the New Law. He is a Priest expressly to perform that tremendous function. Take away that function, and there should be no absolute need of a

Priesthood in the Christian dispensation. Altar and Priest, or Sacrifice and Priest, are correlative terms, and as the Blessed Eucharist is the Sacrifice of the religion of Christ, a Christian Priesthood exists especially on account of that adorable Mystery. And this view of the Priesthood leads us to another view, which is as stupendous as it is certain. It is that it was necessary that Christ should die to leave after Him a Priesthood here on earth. It was not necessary that He should die in order to redeem the world. One single drop of His adorable Blood would have been abundantly sufficient for this purpose; “*Cujus una stilla salvum facere totum mundum quit ab omni scelere,*” says St. Thomas. Yes, one single drop of His adorable Blood shed in His circumcision, when yet an infant, or in the garden the night before His passion, nay, a single tear, or only a prayer, on account of His infinite dignity as Son of God, and God Himself, at the same time that He was man, would have been more than sufficient for the redemption of all mankind. But then there should be no Priest, because no victim. But will it be said that the victims of the Old Law might still continue? For what purpose? They had no value ever in themselves. They were but the “*umbra futurorum bonorum,*” as St. Paul designates them (*Heb. x. 1*); and in due time they were to give way to the adorable Sacrifice of the Death of our Divine Lord upon the Cross, from which, by their reference to it, they derived all their virtue and efficacy. And the Sacrifice of the New Law, that “*clean oblation offered from the rising of the sun to the going down*” (*Mal. i. 11*), is it not the continuation of this same Sacri-

fice of our Saviour's Death on the Cross, the Altar of the Christian Church being thereby a perpetual Calvary, at which the Priest of the New Law daily officiates ? Thus is he a Priest only in virtue of the Death of Christ, and so it may be said, that it was necessary that Christ should die to leave after Him a Priesthood on earth, and every Christian Priest has to say of Himself, that to make him a Priest cost his Divine Lord His Passion and Death, or, to speak in the words of St. Paul, "*the death of the Testator must of necessity come in*" (*Heb. ix. 16*), that the Priest of the New Law may be put in possession of the astounding legacy he has in his Priesthood. How thrilling the thought ! The human mind is lost in it ; and we can only repeat with St. Ephrem, "*exedit omnem cogitationem donum dignitatis sacerdotalis !*"

Having before our minds these two absorbing thoughts, that the function at the Altar, as he celebrates the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass, constitutes pre-eminently the office of the Christian Priest, and that it was necessary, that our great Mediator must have died to afford him this sublime office, let us enter under the guidance of Faith the Supper-room, and witness the mystery of the Last Supper with the various circumstances accompanying it. Our Blessed Lord has Himself performed the Mystery of Transubstantiation, having offered Himself thereby to His eternal Father in Sacrifice, in anticipation of the Sacrifice of the Cross, and having done so, He said to His Apostles there present, and through them to all their successors in the power He was going to impart to them, "*Do THIS FOR A*

COMMEMORATION OF ME"—“HOC FACITE IN MEAM COMMEMORATIONEM” (*Luc. xxii. 19*)—that is to say, what you have seen Me do, you are to do likewise, and as you have seen Me change bread and wine into My Body and Blood, and so offer Myself in Sacrifice, you too are to do the same—you, and all those who are to come after you till the end of time, using for that purpose the words you have heard Me use, and which proceeding from your mouth are to have the same efficacy as they have had proceeding from Mine. Here is *the* beginning of the Christian Priesthood, and so beginning, it has since continued, and will continue till the end of time. It is in pursuance of this divinely instituted ordinance, that we, Priests of the New Law, ascend the Altar every day, to offer “*the clean oblation from the rising of the sun even to the going down thereof*” (*Mal. i. 11*), and in doing so, we take into our hands bread and wine, as our Blessed Saviour did at the Last Supper, and we proceed with the celebration of the holy Sacrifice till we come to the Consecration. And now what is going to happen? Is it that the earth is to be disturbed and the mountains cast into the depths of the sea? or are the sun and moon to be stayed in their course, God obeying the voice of man? O moment, how sacred and solemn! O moment, commanding the regards of the Eternal Father from the highest heavens, Who sends forth His angels to adore! O moment! We pronounce the mysterious words, and as they proceed from our lips, He, Who was from the beginning, by Whom all things were made, and without Whom nothing was made of the things that were made, descends upon the Altar really,

truly, and substantially, to offer Himself in Sacrifice by our ministry in union with the great atoning Sacrifice of Calvary, being identical with that tremendous mystery of man's redemption. O Priest of the Living God, realise, if you can, your position in a function, which fills the angels of heaven with awe—O, listen to the words of St. Augustine, “*O, vere veneranda sacerdotum dignitas in quorum manibus, velut in utero Virginis, Filius Dei incarnatur*” (*Con. ii. in Ps. 37*), and the Imitation of Christ “*Grande mysterium, et magna dignitas Sacerdotum, quibus datum est quod Angelis non est concessum*” (*Lib. iv. ch. 5*). Yes; “*nobis datum est*,” says St. Chrysostom, “*ut habeamus potestatem, quam Deus optimus neque Angelis, neque Archangelis datam esse voluit*” (*Lib. iii. de Sacerd. cap. 3*). O Priest of the Living God, what a position this, in which thou art here placed! O here it is, more than anywhere else, that we are the Ambassadors of Christ, “*pro Christo legatione fungimur*;” for here, in Christ's name, and by His appointment, we have uttered His words, and in union with Him, “*per ipsum, et cum ipso, et in ipso*,” we present Him to the Eternal Father, a Victim of adoration, a Victim of propitiation, a Victim of thanksgiving, and a Victim of impetration—a Victim of infinite value for these great ends of Sacrifice, because, under the humble appearance He assumes upon the Altar, He is the great “*Mediator of God and men*,” according to the appellation of the apostle (*1 Tim. ii. 5*); the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father, of Whom that Eternal Father, as He looks down upon Him from the height of heaven, declares “*This is*

my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." O Priest of the Living God, what a function do you perform every time you celebrate the Holy Sacrifice ? You may be in an obscure corner of the globe ; nevertheless, you are a spectacle engaging the attention of the God of Majesty from the throne of His glory, and you command the reverence of the heavenly court, as you stand forth on the part of mankind here on earth, as also of the suffering souls in purgatory, an advocate pleading for mercy and grace, in a common Priesthood with Him, "*who, in the days of His flesh, with a strong cry and tears offering up prayers and supplications to Him, that was able to save Him from death, was heard for His reverence*" (*Heb. v. 7*). "O," says "the Imitation of Christ," "if this Mystery were celebrated only in one place, and were consecrated by only one Priest in the entire world, with what longing desire would mankind be affected towards that place and that Priest of God, to see the Divine Mysteries celebrated ?" Nay, we can enlarge the idea, and suppose this one Priest to celebrate but one Mass, and that no other Mass was ever celebrated, or was ever to be celebrated, we would be bound to believe this one solitary Mass would give more glory to God than all the praises and homages of all the angels and saints in heaven for all eternity. How wonderful ! How prodigious ! Nothing in heaven or on earth can go beyond this, and therefore is it that the Fathers of the Church do not run into any exaggeration, when they say with St. Isidore of Pelusium, that the Priesthood is the "*extrema meta omnium quæ inter homines expetuntur* ;" or, as St. Ignatius of Antioch

would express the same idea, the “*Apex omnium bonorum, quæ in hominibus sunt*”—the utmost limit, the summit of all that can be desired or esteemed amongst men.

But the “*Imitation*” goes on to observe, that “now there are many Priests, and Christ is offered in many places, that thereby the grace and love of God for man might appear the greater in proportion as the holy Communion is the more widely diffused over the earth” (*B. iv. ch. 1*), and in every Mass we celebrate. We honour God, we give joy to the angels, we edify the Church, we assist the living, and procure rest for the dead, and we make ourselves partakers of every blessing” (*B. iv. ch. 5*). Therefore, the pious author of this invaluable little book hesitates not to say, that the mystery of the Blessed Eucharist preserves the whole world “*mundum conservat universum*” (*B. iv. ch. 1*), such being the wickedness of the world, for, as St. John affirms, “*the whole world is seated in wickedness*” (*1 John v. 19*), that if God were to deal with it according to His justice, He should have long since destroyed it; but the great Mediator of God and man interposes, and by the constant oblation of Himself by the hands of His Priests He stays the Almighty vengeance, and obtains for sinful man the toleration of that mercy, that endureth from generation to generation, from eternity to eternity. We can now understand the words of St. Chrysostom, as he asserts, “*the Priest holds a middle place between God and human nature, receiving for us the Divine blessings as they descend from on high, presenting our petitions before the throne*

of grace, appeasing an angry God," &c., *Hom. in illud Isa. (in anno, quo mortuus est Rex Ozias)*. How amazing! How stupendous! With reason, therefore, did Cassian exclaim : "O, Sacerdos Dei, si altitudinem caeli contemplaris, altior es, si dominorum sublimitatem, sublimior es, soli Deo et Creatori tuo inferior es."

But we must not lose sight of our purpose. We are to recollect having entered on these considerations with the view of finding the pattern, to which the Priest is to render himself conformable, that he may be worthy of the vocation in which he is called ; that, as St. Ambrose observes, "we may show forth what we are in profession and act, more than in name ; that our name may accord with our conduct, and our conduct correspond with our name, lest our name be rendered vain, by a criminal course of conduct ; lest, whilst in a position high and honourable, we degrade ourselves by a habit of life base and dishonourable, lest with a god-like profession we couple a demon-like mode of action, lest with a religious habit we indulge in irreligious pursuits, lest we combine a debasing irregularity with an elevated dignity"—
quod sumus professione et actione potius quam nomine, demonstremus, ut nomen congruat actioni, actio respondeat nomini, ne sit nomen inane et crimen immane, ne sit honor sublimis et vita deformis, ne sit deifica professio et diabolica actio, ne sit religiosus amictus et irreligiosus provectus, ne sit gradus excelsus, et deformis excessus."

But are we to expect amongst men a perfection adequate to the Divine function the Priest discharges at the Altar? Does not the "Imitation of Christ" proclaim, that,

if we had the purity of an angel, and the sanctity of St. John the Baptist, we should not yet be worthy of so sublime a function? Oh! no; we cannot pretend to merit such a privilege. It is only by the ineffable grace and condescension of the Divine Host Himself, that we are permitted to approach the table He has prepared for us, in the same way, as the "Imitation" tells us, as if a beggar were invited to the banquet of some rich man, in which case the beggar could make no return except to humble himself more and more, and thank his gracious benefactor. But on this account is it, that we are bound all the more to aspire to the highest sanctity and perfection, that, so far as it is granted to human infirmity, we may comply with our dear Lord's injunction, "*Be ye, therefore, perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.*"—"Estote, igitur, perfecti, sicut et Pater vester caelestis perfectus est" (*Matt. v. 48*), and lead lives conformable, as far as Divine grace will enable us, with a ministry higher than the angels in heaven have to perform.

The holy Council of Trent, treating of the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass, speaks as follows:—"But if we are of necessity to confess, that no other work equally holy and divine can be performed by the Faithful of Christ, as this tremendous Mystery it is sufficiently manifest that all pains and care should be taken, that it be performed, with all possible interior cleanliness and purity of heart, and with every external appearance of devotion and piety" (*Sess. xxii. de Sacrif. Missae*).

St. Chrysostom asks the questions, "in what rank of men are we to place the Priest? What innocence, and

what piety are we to require in him? Consider what hands these should be that are employed in such a ministry, and what the tongue that utters such words." And then follow the thrilling words "Quo non oportet esse puriorem tali fruentem sacrificio? Quo solari radio non splendidiorem manum carnem hanc dividentem? Os quod igne spirituali repletur? Lingua, quae tremendo nimis sanguine rubescit" (*Hom. ix. ad popul. Antioch.*).

In similar language does the Imitation of Christ appeal to our sense of piety as follows: "O, quam magnum, et honorabile est officium Sacerdotum, quibus datum est, Dominum majestatis verbis sacris consecrare, labiis benedicere, manibus tenere, ore proprio sumere, et caeteris ministrare;" after which the pious author proceeds to say, "O, quam mundae debent esse manus illae? quam purum os? quam sanctum corpus? quam immaculatum cor Sacerdotis, ad quod toties ingreditur Auctor puritatis? De ore sacerdotis nullum verbum nisi sanctum, nisi honestum, nisi utile procedere debet, qui tam saepe Christi accipit Sacramentum. Oculi ejus simplices esse debent et pudici, qui Christi corpus solent intueri: manus purae et ad caelum elevatae, quae Creatorem caeli et terrae solent contrectare. Sacerdotibus specilater in lege dicitur, *sancti estote, quoniam ego sanctus sum, Dominus Deus vester*" (*Lib. iv. cap. 11.*).

It is on account of his sacred functions, and especially on account of the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass, that St. Thomas, the Angel of the School, insists on a higher prefection as being required in a Priest than in a simple

religious. He is speaking of Holy Orders, and his teaching is, that “ by this Sacrament a person is deputed to the highest functions, whereby he has to serve Christ Himself in the Sacrament of the Altar, for which more interior sanctity is required, than for the religious state.”

It follows, therefore, from all that has been said, that looking to the Priest of God in reference to the Divine Mystery of the Blessed Eucharist alone, he should, as the Imitation requires, “be adorned with every virtue, he should be an example of a good life to others, his conversation should not be with the ordinary and common ways of mankind, but with the angels in heaven, or with perfect men on earth.” Thus may he be permitted to say with the Apostle : “ *Our conversation is in heaven ; from whence also we look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowness, made like to the body of His glory, according to the operation whereby also He is able to subdue all things unto Himself* ” (*Philip. iii. 20, 21*).

A PRIEST IN REFERENCE TO THE HOLY TRIBUNAL OF PENANCE.

Here, too, in the holy Tribunal of Penance, the Priest of God exercises a Divine function, administering the judgment and justice of the Most High to mankind here upon earth. Who could believe in such a ministry, unless we had God’s own word for it ? In the natural order of things it belongs exclusively to him, who is offended, to pardon the offender, and no one else can say to him, I forgive you the offence you have committed.

Consequently, since sin is an offence against God, it is the exclusive prerogative of God to forgive it. “*Tibi soli peccavi, et malum coram te feci,*” says the penitent David (*Ps. 1, 6*) ; and when the Prophet Nathan was sent to him, it was not to forgive him, but to declare his forgiveness on the part of God, saying, “*the Lord also hath taken away thy sin*” (*2 Kings xii. 13*).

The Pharisees would have reason for saying of our Divine Lord, “*Who is this who speaketh blasphemies ? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?*” when He said to the paralytic “*man, thy sins are forgiven thee*” (*Luke v. 20, 21*)—they would, I say, have reason on their side, except that they should have been convinced of our Blessed Lord’s Divinity by the miracles they had seen Him work in so many various ways. For, again may we ask, who could believe so wonderful a power to be conferred upon a human being, unless we had the unequivocal assurance of God’s Word ? Let us, therefore, assist in imagination on the occasion, when our Divine Lord and Master actually conferred this power on the Apostles, and through them on all Priests to be ordained thenceafter in His Church. The moment is solemn. It is on the occasion of one of those visits, with which He favoured His Apostles after His Resurrection. It is, indeed, on the evening of the very day He arose from the dead. The disciples are together with closed doors, for fear of the Jews. Notwithstanding the doors being closed, our Blessed Lord appears in the midst of them, and, with gracious voice, says to them, “*Peace be to you;*” and having thus saluted them, He shows them His hands and feet with the marks of the nails in them, and His

sacred side with the wound-mark of the lance; and as the disciples rejoice to see Him, He says again to them, “*Peace be to you,*” adding “*as the Father hath sent Me, I also send you;*” that is, My Father sent Me into this world on a mission of salvation to mankind, I am about to return to Him, but My mission is to continue—it is to be continued by you. All power in heaven and earth is given to Me, and in virtue of this power I send you, as My Father sent Me. “*Having said this,*” the sacred text tells us, “*He breathed on them.*” This ceremony deserves all our attention. We read that, when God created our first parent Adam, He formed his body out of the slime of the earth. He formed it in the full proportions of a grown-up man. However, it lay lifeless on the earth’s surface. But the Lord breathed into his face the breath of life, and he became immediately, as the Scripture expresses it, “*a living soul.*” So our Divine Lord in the present instance breathes upon the Apostles, as if giving them in a manner a new soul. This was the communication of the Holy Ghost; for He immediately adds, “**RECEIVE YE THE HOLY GHOST: WHOSE SINS YOU SHALL FORGIVE, THEY ARE FORGIVEN THEM, AND WHOSE SINS YOU SHALL RETAIN, THEY ARE RETAINED**” (*John xx. 19 and sqq.*). O, what words these! What an institution do they establish here on earth! An institution of mercy for sinful man to forgive him his sins. An institution such as had not previously existed in this world, now 4,000 years old—an institution whereby man takes the place of God to forgive his fellow-man his offences against the Divine Majesty. O, well may we exclaim with Isaias, “*Quis audivit unquam tale? et quis vidit*

huic simile?" "Who hath ever heard such a thing? and who hath seen the like to this?" (Isai. lxvi. 8).

Let us dwell a little upon our dear Saviour's words of love and mercy. Could man ever expect such an effect of God's bounty? St. Paul asks the following questions in his Epistle to the Romans: "*Who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made him?*" (Rom. xi. 34, 35). Well, indeed, may we apply these interrogatories to the institution of grace and mercy here presented to us. *Who hath known the mind of the Lord?* Left to ourselves could we ever suppose our Divine Lord and Saviour could have in His mind the intention of establishing here on earth a tribunal of mercy for the forgiveness of sin, and of appointing men in this world to dispense this mercy? We could never think of such a thing. *And who hath been His counsellor?* Did anyone suggest to Him the idea of such a tribunal? any man here on earth? or any angel in heaven even? Never. It could never occur to men or angels to make such a suggestion. What then? With whom did He take advice? With Himself alone, and with His own bounty and love for mankind. But let us further ask with the Apostle, *Who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made him?* In other words, had mankind done any service to God, to deserve as a reward the great favour our Blessed Lord confers upon them? Alas! it is quite the contrary. Poor guilty man! instead of reward, he deserved hell on account of his sins, and, O prodigy of mercy! instead of punishing him, our Blessed Redeemer

only desires to pardon him ; and He absolutely takes occasion from his sins to show forth His infinite bounty and mercy by instituting a tribunal, where the sinner can get pardon from his fellow-man on the part of God, and a pardon so complete and absolute as to rule, so to say, the Divine Justice in heaven. How wonderful ! How astonishing ! What we could never think of asking, our Blessed Lord does of His own spontaneous bounty, and, instead of taking vengeance upon us for our sins, and casting us into hell, He institutes a means of pardon, putting into the hands of men here on earth the keys of the kingdom of heaven, to open to us that kingdom of His glory. There is nothing here on earth amongst the institutions of states and empires to give us an idea of this extraordinary power, with which it pleased our Blessed Lord to enrich His church. As St. Chrysostom observes, “the princes of this world have power over our mortal members, to bind or loose them ; but the power of the Priest of God reaches the soul, and in its effects mounts up even into heaven ” (*L. iii. de Sacerd.*).

But, why speak of the powers of this world, to contrast with them the power committed to the Priest of God over the souls of men ? Nay, we may extend the contrast to the heavenly spirits encircling the Throne of God. They, indeed, bring messages into this world—they defend us “*against the spirits of wickedness in the high places* ” (*Ephes. vi. 12*) ; but to none of them has God said, whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins you retain, they are retained. Hence St. Chrysostom affirms, “*Iis (sacerdotibus) datum est, ut potestatem habeant, quam Deus optimus neque angelis,*

neque archangelis datam esse voluit ; neque illis dictum est, quaecumque alligaveritis in terra erunt alligata et in caelo, et quaecumque solveritis in terra erunt soluta et in caelo." But St. Bernardine of Sienna would even pass by the Choirs of all the heavenly spirits, and bowing down before the throne of Mary Immaculate, he addresses her with a heart melting with tender devotion, saying, "O, Virgo benedicta, excusa me, quia non loquor contra te. Sacerdotem Ipse praetulit supra te." (*Tom. i. Serm. 20.*) And Innocent III. with the same idea before his mind expresses it by saying, "Virgo excellentior fuit Apostolis ; non tamen illi, sed istis Dominus claves regni coelorum commisit (*n. quaedam de paenit.*)". With reason, therefore, does St. Ephrem exclaim, "O, stupendum miraculum ! O, inexplicabilis potestas !" It is, indeed, stupendous, and inexplicable, and, as we contemplate it, we may apply the words of St. Paul : "*O altitudo, divitiarum sapientiae et scientiae Dei ! Quam incomprehensibilia sunt judicia ejus, et investigabiles viae ejus*" (*Rom. xi. 33.*).

But we will go somewhat into detail to admire still more the Tribunal of Penance in the wonderful effects its operation produces in the souls of men. In this examination we shall be guided by Divine Faith, and we have only to listen simply to our holy Mother the Church in what she teaches her children. These effects are marvellous indeed, and we never could suppose such power given into the hands of men, if our Faith allowed us to doubt about it.

The first effect is to free the soul from the occupation of the devil ; for a soul in mortal sin is verily and

indeed in the possession of Satan, and even several evil spirits may occupy it at the same time, as we see in the Gospel, where our Divine Lord tells us, that when the unclean spirit has been expelled from a man, he comes back again, and taking with him seven other evil spirits, he enters with them into the poor man from whom he was expelled, and all eight take their abode within him, so that, as our Saviour says, “*the last state of that man becomes worse than the first*” (*Luke xi. 26*). Here, therefore, in the sacred Tribunal of Penance, is the minister of Christ engaged, more than elsewhere, in a hand-to-hand conflict with the enemy of man’s salvation, rescuing from his grasp immortal souls, for whom Christ died. What need, consequently, has he not “*to take unto himself*,” as the Apostle would exhort him, “*the armour of God, that he may be able to resist, and stand in all things perfect, with loins girt about with truth, having on the breastplate of justice, with feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace: in all things taking the shield of Faith, and the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. By all prayer and supplication praying at all times in the spirit*” (*Ephes. vi. 13 & sqq.*).

In the second place, you release the souls of your penitents from the slavery of sin, for, as St. John so distinctly affirms, “*whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin*” (*John viii. 34*) ; you deliver them from this slavery, so that, as when the angel laid his hand on St. Peter in prison, the chain, with which he was bound, fell off his hands, in the same way, as you raise your hand over the penitent kneeling at your feet, the chain of

iniquity falls from off his soul, and he is restored to the liberty of a child of God. O, is it not fitting, as the Apostle says, that exercising such a ministry, you yourself should be "*holy, innocent, undefiled, and separated from sinners?*" (*Heb. vii. 26*).

In the third place, you deliver them from the everlasting punishment due to their sins. A minute ago, that poor soul, whom you have just absolved, was a child of hell, under sentence of eternal misery; now she is once more become a child of God, and reinstated in her right and title to the kingdom of heaven. O, should not the Priest who achieves such a work, a work greater, as St. Augustine does not hesitate to affirm, than the creation of heaven and earth, be in every sense "*a man of God*" (*1 Tim. vi. 11*), to be fit to accomplish so Godlike a work?

In the fourth place, as you pronounce the words of absolution over your penitent, you cleanse his soul from the defilements of sin. It is easy to conceive, that a house, that was in the possession of an occupant of unclean habits, is left by him in a filthy state. Now the devil is called everywhere by our Divine Lord "*the unclean spirit*," and a soul in his occupation is in a state of uncleanness more filthy than could be represented if all the filth of the world were heaped together, but by the grace of the Sacrament of Penance you wash her "*in the blood of the Lamb*" (*Apoc. xxii. 14*), you "*sprinkle her with hyssop, and she is washed clean, and made even whiter than snow*" before God and His angels, who rejoice at a spectacle so charming in their eyes. Oh, how can we but shudder at the thought of this work

of purification being performed by hands defiled with the filth of sin !

In the fifth place, having delivered your penitent from the thraldom of Satan and sin, and washed him clean “*in the blood of the Lamb*,” you render him the abode of the Holy Ghost, who comes immediately to take possession of his soul. O, how enchanting the words of the Apostle—“*Know you not, that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God ; and you are not your own ? For you are bought with a great price. Glorify, and bear God in your body*” (*1 Cor. vi. 19, 20*).

In the sixth place, when the Divine Spirit thus takes possession of the soul of your penitent, He applies Himself to the embellishment of it, by enkindling afresh the heavenly virtue of Divine love, thereby giving life to the other two supernatural virtues of Faith and Hope, by infusing the moral virtues with sanctifying grace, by imparting a celestial splendour to the faculties of the soul, by making her once again a child of God, and heir to the kingdom of heaven, and “*partaker of the Divine nature*” according to the words of St. Peter (*2 Peter i. 4*), so that he may say with St. Paul, “*I live, now not I ; but Christ liveth in me*” (*Galat. ii. 20*). What a transformation ! How wonderful ! And this is the work of your ministry in the Tribunal of Penance. No wonder—the words of St. Ephrem, “*Stupendum miraculum ! inexplicabilis potestas !*”

Is there anything in nature to give us an idea of this wonderful power exercised by God’s minister in the Tribunal of Penance ? There is a portion, as we know,

of mankind, who, differing from us, are black in the colour of their skin. God could, but He never did it, and most likely never will, yet He could, by His omnipotent will, give to certain persons chosen from amongst men the power of changing the colour of these black human beings. If He did so, how wonderful would it not be to see them approach the persons appointed, and become all at once white, as these specially privileged persons would reach their hand over them? This would, indeed, be a wonder, and all the world would be astonished at such a power being granted to beings here on earth; and no longer would it be asked "*if the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots?*" (*Jer. xiii. 23*). But this great wonder, which never took place, and in all probability never will, and which we can only imagine, would be a change in the body, and on the body's surface merely; whereas the change accomplished in the Tribunal of Penance affects the soul with all her faculties, transforming her, from being a slave of Satan, and hideous, like Satan himself, to be a child of God, and temple of the Holy Ghost, brought back to her resemblance with God, so that, beholding her, He sees His own image reflected in the marvellous beauty and splendour, with which she is invested at the hands of the Priest of God, as he pronounces over her the sentence of absolution, in virtue of the commission he holds from God for the remission of sin. But, to be worthy of pronouncing that sentence, and effecting the stupendous results it involves, should not the Priest of God himself be sinless? Should he not himself be a man

filled with the sevenfold Spirit, “*the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the Spirit of knowledge and of godliness, and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord?*” (*Isai. xi. 2*). And should he not show forth in his general habits of life the fruits of the Divine Spirit, “*charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity?*” (*Galat. v. 22, 23*). Surely, surely, having received the Holy Ghost in his ordination for the remission of sin, it follows as a necessary consequence, that he should be constantly animated from within with the gifts and fruits of the Divine Spirit, and display them outwardly, in order to maintain himself as worthy of the vocation in which he is called.

CONCLUSION.

We have now considered our Ministry, the office of Priesthood, with which we are invested. We have considered it in a general view of it. We have considered it in the power it gives us with respect to the natural Body of our Divine Lord in the adorable Mystery of the Blessed Eucharist, and we have considered it, too, in the power it gives us in reference to His mystic Body in the Sacrament of Penance. These considerations have conducted us up the mountain, and shown us the true pattern, the standard ideal of a Priest of the New Law. We have seen under these various aspects, that the Priesthood, as St. Chrysostom would say to us, is to be ranked in the order and category of divine things, and, according to St. Dionysius, is more than angelic, and is even divine. Our object in this review has been to

place our vocation before our eyes, and see if our lives be in keeping with it. It has been to see, that if great be the height, to which we have been raised, great in proportion is the depth, that yawns beneath our feet. How thrilling the words of St. Jerome, “non est facile stare loco Pauli, tenere gradum Petri. Terribilis, prorsus terribilis locus iste—locus quo stas.” Yes, our position is that, from which the greatest saints have shrunk. The Chrysostoms, the Gregorys, the Ambroses, the Martins, had to be forced to enter the sanctuary. St. Vincent de Paul never ceased to accuse himself of criminal temerity for having ventured to become a Priest, and never gave the slightest encouragement to any relative of his to aspire to the ecclesiastical profession. These great saints understood in its practical signification the divine lesson, “*qui mihi ministrat me sequatur.*” It should, therefore, be our never-ceasing solicitude to look, in one direction, to the pattern we are to imitate, and to ourselves in another, in order to keep our lives in conformity with it, and thereby be able, as St. Ambrose exhorts us, to repel the accusation of the Psalmist, “*homo, cum in honore esset, non intellexit, comparatus est jumentis insipientibus, et similis factus est illis.*” (*Ps. xlviij. 13.*)

A PRIEST—WHAT HE OUGHT NOT TO BE.

“In terrâ sanctorum iniqua gessit, et non videbit gloriam Domini.”

ISAI. xxvi. 10.

We have considered what a Priest ought to be. We have done so by taking account of his ministry in a general view of it, in the first place. We then passed on to view it in reference to the adorable Mystery of the Blessed Eucharist; and finally we considered it with regard to the Sacrament of Penance. These considerations presented to us a pattern, or standard, to which we should conform our lives and habits, in order to render ourselves worthy of the vocation in which we have been called. They prepared us also, in the way of contrast, for the consideration of what a Priest ought not to be in his character of minister of Christ, and dispenser of the Mysteries of God.

It should appear a self-evident proposition, that he who is appointed to take away the sins of the world, should himself be without sin, and that sin in him would be more grievous than in other men. This is a synoptic view of the subject we desire to treat of, and which we will divide under four distinct heads. The first will be, that sin in a Priest is more grievous than in other men, on account of the greater knowledge, and consequently the greater malice, with which he sins.

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In the second place, we will see the sins of the Priest to be more grievous than those of other men, on account of the special ingratitude involved in his guilt. In the third place, we will see that sin is more grievous in a Priest than in other men, on account of its opposition to the sanctity of his profession ; and in the fourth place, we will see the tremendous difficulty a Priest must have in rising out of sin, and reinstating himself in the grace of God. These are terrific thoughts even at a glance, and as we enter upon them let us beg of God to enlighten us with His Divine Light, that, as the Psalmist says, “*we may never sleep in darkness ; lest, at any time, the enemy should say, I have prevailed against him*” (*Ps. xii. 5*).

Then, in the first place, we lay down the proposition : SIN IN A PRIEST IS MORE GRIEVOUS THAN IN OTHER MEN ON ACCOUNT OF THE GREATER KNOWLEDGE, AND, CONSEQUENTLY, THE GREATER MALICE WITH WHICH HE SINS. This proposition should seem to need no proof, but it needs deep consideration on the part of the Priest of God. It is for want of consideration on the great truths of religion that the prophet cries out, “*desolatione desolata est universa terra : quia nullus est qui recognitet corde*” (*Jer. xii. 11*). The poor pagans have but a hazy knowledge of God, yet with that knowledge they can offend Him mortally, and be damned ; for speaking of them, the Apostle says, “*quicumque enim sine lege peccaverunt, sine lege peribunt* ;” just as he adds, “*quicumque in lege peccaverunt, per legem judicabuntur*” (*Rom. ii. 12*). The poor labourer, who has to bear so heavy a share in the malediction pronounced upon Adam and his posterity,

and whose thoughts are engaged with his daily toil, as he earns his bread in the sweat of his brow—he, nevertheless, can offend God mortally, and be damned; and it must be said that his sin is greater than that of the pagan, “*propter notitiam veritatis*,” as St. Thomas would teach us, or as we ourselves would say, because he ought to know better, the principle being, that in proportion to the amount of religious knowledge of the sinner, his sin is all the more grievous. Applying this principle to sin in a Priest, what must be our estimate of his guilt? Of all living men he is the last to be allowed the plea of ignorance, to be allowed to say, “I did not know what I was doing when I offended my Creator and my God.” From his early youth he was taught the lesson, “*quam malum et amarum est reliquisse te Dominum Deum tuum*” (*Jer. ii. 19*), which, as he advanced in years, he heard so often repeated. In his ecclesiastical studies he surveyed the relations between God and man, and saw the infinite malice of mortal sin in the infinite distance, which separates Him, who is offended, from him, who offends, the great Creator of heaven and earth, on the one side, and a vile worm of the earth on the other. Since he has been a Priest, “*his lips were to keep knowledge*,” and the faithful “*were to seek the law at his mouth*;” because he was to them “*the Angel of the Lord of Hosts*,” by his office amongst them” (*Mal. ii. 7*). To him “*it was given to know the mystery of God*” (*Luke viii. 10*), and therefore was it, that he was set up as the light of the world “*Lux mundi*” (*Matt. v. 14*). His mission was to teach and preach the Word of God—a mission to

which he was bound “*coram Deo, et Jesu Christo, qui judicaturus est viros et mortuos, per adventum ipsius et regnum ejus*” (*2 Tim. iv. 1*). In the fulfilment of this mission how often did he not tell his people, that mortal sin is the greatest of all misfortunes, that it is not only the greatest evil, but properly speaking the only evil in the world, and an infinite evil because assailing God, who is the infinite good? How often did he not hold up to their horror the terrible fact, that sin it was that precipitated legions of angels from the heights of heaven into the abyss of hell, and transformed them in the twinkling of an eye into hideous demons? He repeated to them again and again how mortal sin expelled our first parents out of the terrestrial paradise, deprived them of the justice and sanctity, in which they were created, entailed on their posterity to the last generation their guilt, and how this one sin flooded the earth with all the evils and calamities, of which it has been since the theatre, and shall be the theatre, till time be no more; and how often did he not open the regions of the damned to their view, and tell them that these dreadful fires, in which these wretched fellow-beings are tormented, have been lit up only for the punishment of sin, and that even one mortal sin, committed in a moment, is enough to condemn the perpetrator to these unutterable torments for ever and ever? All this he knows—all this he has taught. What then? Let us repeat what we have already said, of all men living he cannot be allowed to allege ignorance as an excuse. Oh! it is to him especially the Apostle would cry out, “*Existimas autem hoc, O homo, quod tu effugies judicium Dei.*

Thesaurizas tibi iram in die iræ et revelationis justi judicii Dei” (*Rom. ii. 3–5*). No, he sins in the midst of light, and therefore St. Bernard exclaims, “ peccans in clero peccat in cœlo ;” and St. Gregory : “ quo melius videt, eo gravius peccat.” O ! what a reflection—this knowledge, this special knowledge, which the Priest of God has of the grievousness of sin, puts him so far out of the pale of God’s mercy, that mercy, which apologized for the Jews in the very work of their crucifying the Lord of Glory, saying “ *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do* ” (*Luke xxiii. 34*). I say the sinner-Priest puts himself beyond the pale of this wonderful mercy, because it cannot be said of him by any stretch of indulgence, that lie knows not what he does in committing sin—he in whose ears the words of the Prophet so constantly resound, “ *scito et vide, quia malum et amarum est reliquisse te Dominum Deum tuum* ” (*Jer. ii. 19*), and whose mission it is “ *to lift up his voice like a trumpet in the house of God, and show His people their evil doings, and to the house of Jacob their sins* ” (*Isai. lviii. 1*).

But we have said that the sins of the Priest being committed with greater knowledge, they are accompanied on that account with greater malice than the sins of other men. There can be no difficulty in seeing this. In fact one is the measure of the other ; the greater the knowledge, the greater also the malice in all evil doings ; and, this being so, St. Thomas lays it down, that every sin of malice is a sin against the Holy Ghost. “ *Omne peccatum ex malitia est contra Spiritum Sanctum* ” (*de malo q. 5, art. 4*), a sin against the Holy Ghost “ *not*

to be forgiven," according to the express words of our Divine Lord, "*either in this world, or the world to come*" (*Matt. xii. 32*), that is, as commentators expound, very difficult to be remitted, on account of the blindness and obduracy usually resulting from sin committed through malice. Are we not, therefore, to apply to the sinner-Priest the terrible words of our Divine Lord, "*excusationem non habent de peccato suo?*" (*Joan. xv. 22*); he has no excuse on account of his knowledge. He knew the maxim, that he, "*who despises small things, falls by little and little,*" and that "*he that exposes himself to danger shall perish therein.*" Nevertheless, he left his mind open to thoughts and imaginations, which, like sparks of fire coming straightway from hell, have kindled up his evil inclinations and passions into a devouring flame within him. What excuse, then, has he for the woful consequences that have ensued—consequences bringing disgrace upon himself, and shame upon the Church? He knew the fatal results of exposing himself to occasions of sin, that he could not pretend to be stronger than Samson, holier than David, or wiser than Solomon, and seeing how the occasion of sin was fatal to them, he has no excuse for exposing himself to similar occasions, as if he were an exception to the rest of mankind. He knew that prayer is "*the armour of God, enabling us to stand against the deceits of the devil, and wrestle with the spirits of wickedness in high places*" (*Ephes. vi. 11, 12*). He knew that meditation and sin are incompatible, that a man to remain in sin must give up meditation, or to practise meditation must give up sin; that, as the ark of the covenant prostrated the idol

Dagon in his own temple, and dashed him to pieces on the pavement beneath, so does meditation overthrow sin in the soul of the sinner, and make these mortal members “*that had served uncleanness and iniquity unto iniquity,*” become instruments “*to serve justice unto sanctification*” (*Rom. vi. 19*). This—all this, he knew. What excuse, therefore, has he before God for having abandoned the practice of meditation, seeing with open eyes the consequences so certain to ensue? Let us, therefore, bow down our heads, and acknowledge before God and the whole court of heaven, that our sins are more grievous than the sins of other men, on account of the greater knowledge we possess, and, consequently, the greater malice, with which we offend our Creator.

We proceed to our second point. It asserts that:—

SIN IN A PRIEST IS MORE GRIEVOUS THAN IN OTHER MEN,
ON ACCOUNT OF THE INGRATITUDE INVOLVED IN HIS
GUILT.

This was the ground taken by the Prophet Nathan with David, when deputed by God to reprove him for his sin. He reminded the royal offender of the signal favours God had lavished upon him, how He had so often, and so wonderfully, delivered him from the hand of Saul, and placed him, in his stead, on the throne of Israel, and how, nevertheless, he offended his Divine Benefactor, returning evil for good by his sins. The reproach was overwhelming. From his inmost soul David confessed his guilt, and from that moment commenced the penance and flowing of tears, which have made him an example of a true penitent to the whole

world. Yes, gratitude is an essential quality of our humanity, degraded though it is by the fall of our first parents, and the man who, rebelling against the instincts of his nature, divests himself of the virtue of gratitude, renders himself unworthy of the society of mankind. It is also a principle, that ingratitude becomes aggravated in the twofold proportion of the services we receive, and the dignity of our benefactor. For example, when the subject offends his sovereign, raising the standard of rebellion against his throne, the crime is a grievous one, and calls for the extreme penalty of the law. But, when the minister of state, when he, who by the favour of his sovereign was taken from amongst the people, and advanced from post to post through all the gradations of honour to the highest position under the crown—when he, thus favoured, thus honoured, raises the standard of revolt without any provocation in the very court of the sovereign, how much more grievous is not his crime? A faint illustration this of the case of a Priest guilty of sin! Who is more favoured or more honoured than the Priest of God? and these favours and honours come from the hand of Him, who is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords—favours and honours, in comparison with which the favours and honours of this world are as the filth of the dung-heap, as St. Paul would regard them. Who, let the question be repeated, can be more favoured or honoured than the Priest of God, taken as he is by an election and vocation altogether special and mysterious from amidst thousands, from amongst his kindred and family, and raised to a dignity more than angelic—a dignity associating him

with God Himself in the functions of his office ? Who, then, can estimate his guilt ? Who can form a just idea of the enormity of his crime, when by sin he rebels against the God of Majesty, who elevated him to so sublime a pinnacle of dignity ? Oh ! God Himself complains, and let us listen to His piercing words. “*Si inimicus meus maledixisset mihi, sustinuissem utique ;*”—were you an enemy, had I given you any provocation, I would, indeed, have suffered the outrage you do Me, “*sustinuissem ;*” but, “*quid feci tibi, aut in quo contristavi te ? responde mihi.*” On the contrary, let Me ask you, “*quid ultra debui facere vineæ meæ, et non feci ?*” What could I do for you beyond what I have done ? “*Responde mihi.*” Yes, let Me say again, were it an enemy, I would, indeed, have patience with him, and borne the injury, but it is thou—“*tu vero homo unanimes,*”—thou, whom I have made a special friend, “*dux meus,*” My guide even in the power I have given thee over Me in the Sacrament of My love, and My guide again in the guidance of My people, “*et notus meus,*” My familiar friend, whom I have admitted into My most intimate friendship—“*tu homo, qui simul tecum dulcèς capiebas cibos.*” Yes, you approached day after day My table, and received sweetmeats at My hands, the bread of angels, My own Body and Blood, and so in the house of God we walked in concord—“*in domo Dei ambularimus cum consensu*” (*Ps. liv.*). I have introduced thee into the house of God, and made it a joint abode for thee with Myself, and after all this thou hast lifted up thy heel against Me ! oh, yes, “*qui manducat panem tecum, levabit contra me calcaneum suum*”

(*Joan.* xiii. 18.) I would have patience with an ordinary sinner, but with thee there is no room left for patience—better for thee, that thou never wert born—for thee have I reserved a chastisement, such as “*whosoever shall hear it, both his ears shall tingle*” (*1 Kings* iii. 11), because thou hast paid Me evil things for good by the ingratitude—the deep-dyed ingratitude accompanying thy sins. Oh! what reason has the sinner-Priest above all men to cry out with the Prophet, “*quis dabit aquam capit meo et fontem lacrymarum oculis meis*” (*Jer. ix. 1*). Oh, that his tears would run down “*as a torrent day and night*,” to wash away more and more the iniquity of his sins, the special iniquity attaching to them on account of the ingratitude, which aggravates them so enormously above the sins of other men.

Our third point states that :—

SIN IN A PRIEST IS MORE GRIEVOUS THAN IN OTHER MEN,
ON ACCOUNT OF ITS OPPOSITION TO THE SANCTITY OF
HIS STATE.

To say that a Priest, on account of the holiness of his profession, should lead a life exempt from mortal sin, is to lay down what should appear a self-evident proposition. Therefore, it is manifest that, on this account, a special malice attaches to his guilt.

His ministry is holy in all its functions. The Word he preaches is holy, being the Word of God; the Sacraments he dispenses are holy, being the channels of Divine Grace to the souls of mankind for their sanctification; and, above all, the daily Sacrifice he celebrates

is holy—thrice holy—being holiness in its source and essence ; and the mere idea of a sinful hand outreached for the remission of sin, of a sinful tongue to announce the pure Word of God, and of a sinner's voice to bring down the God of all sanctity on the Altar—the mere idea of such a fellowship between light and darkness, of such a concord between Christ and Belial, fills the soul with horror. It would be, in very truth and fact, “*the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place*” (*Matt. xxiv. 15*).

We are arrived at the fourth division of our subject. It is :

THE SPECIAL DIFFICULTY A PRIEST HAS IN RECOVERING HIMSELF FROM SIN AND REINSTATING HIMSELF IN GOD'S HOLY GRACE.

In treating this point I will make myself at home with my brethren in the ministry, whom I am addressing, and what I am going to say “*I would not tell it in Geth, nor publish it in the streets of Ascalon*” (*2 Kings i. 20*). It is simply this, that of all the cases that come in our way in the administration of the Sacrament of Penance, the least hopeful, not to say the most hopeless, is that of a fallen Priest. Let us bring before our minds the various categories of sinners, and let us single out of them the very worst cases we can collect, would we not take any of them in hands, with more hope, than we would feel in the case of a fallen Priest ?

And our experience—has it not been the experience of all times ? Let us listen to the Prophet Jeremias.

“Propheta et Sacerdos polluti sunt : et in domo meâ inveni malum eorum, ait Dominus. Idcirco via eorum erit quasi lubricum in tenebris ; impellentur enim, et corruent in eâ” (*Jer. xxiii. 11, 12*). What should we expect of a man treading a slippery way in the dark ? what, but to fall ? and if he rise, it would only be to fall again, till in the end he should fall to rise no more. Such is the fallen Priest—“*ait Dominus omnipotens.*”

St. Jerome, speaking of a fallen Priest, says, “Grandis dignitas sacerdotum, sed grandis ruina, si peccent (*Lib. 18 in cap. Ezecl.*)

And St. Bernard, giving expression to the same idea, says “ab altiore fit casus gravior,” and St. Ambrose drawing out the idea more fully, says, “ut levius est de plano corrue, sic gravius est, qui de sublimi ceciderit dignitate, quia ruina, quae de alto est, graviori casû colliditur” (*de dignit. Sacerd.*) The application is only too obvious. It is the Priest that falls from his high dignity, as if from a lofty height, and is crushed by the fall. This is what the Prophet Ezechiel exhibits to our view, where he says, “*posui te in monte sancto Dei, et peccasti, et ejeci te de monte Dei, et perdidisti te*” (*Ezecl. xxviii. 14*). What is this mountain of God, from which the Priest has fallen ? St. Peter Chrysologus would tell us, “*Quid altius caelo?*” asks the holy Father, and he answers his own question, “*de caelo cadit qui in caelestibus delinquit*” (*Serm. 26*). Thus do we see the recovery of a fallen Priest especially difficult on account of the high dignity from which he has fallen.

St. Chrysostom compares his case with that of a simple

member of the faithful, and observes, “Sæcularis homo post peccatum facile ad paenitentiam venit.” Yes, the poor sinner from amongst the faithful assists at a mission, or he hears a sermon on death, or judgment, or hell, or heaven, or eternity ; he is struck and is converted from the evil of his ways on the spot. The reason is, as the Saint explains, because these great truths are new to him, not having before reflected upon them, although he had known them from his catechism, and, as they are forcibly presented to him, they overwhelm him with fear and consternation. But a Priest, the holy Doctor observes—a Priest, who has abused the grace of God, and acted in opposition to all the lights and knowledge he has received—what terror have the most terrible truths of religion for such a man ? For, as the same holy Father goes on to say, “omnia, quæ sunt in Scripturis ante oculos ejus inveterata, vilia aestimantur, nam quicquid sibi terribile est, usu vilescit” (*Hom. 40, cap. 21 Matt.*). Yes, the heart of the fallen Priest is as the wayside, and the seed of God’s Word falls upon it only to be immediately carried off by the birds of the air ; and the prophecy of Isaias, as our Saviour affirms, is fulfilled in him, “*by hearing you shall hear, and not understand*” (*Matt. xiii. 14*). Oh ! yes, here is the difficulty—death and judgment, hell, heaven, and eternity have been frequently brought before his mind already. Nevertheless, he is fallen. How, then, will these subjects lift him up ? Hence the conclusion, at which St. Chrysostom arrives, “*Nihil impossibilius quam illum corrigere, qui omnia scit* ;” and, in another place, he expresses the same idea,

by saying, “*Laici delinquentes facile emendantur, clerici si mali fuerint, inemendabiles sunt.*”

But, after all, is not this the result of abusing God’s grace? The rule is, turn to good account the graces you receive, and additional graces will be given you; but abuse the graces that are bestowed on you, or receive them in vain, not only additional graces are refused you, but you are deprived of those you have.

“*Take the pound away from him,*” says our Divine Saviour, “*and give it to him that hath ten pounds. I say to you, that to every one that hath it shall be given, and from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken from him*” (*Luke xix. 24–26*). This is the teaching St. Paul inculcates likewise, where he says, “*the earth that drinketh in the rain which cometh upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is tilled, receiveth a blessing from God; but that which bringeth forth thorns and briers, is reprobate, and very near to a curse, whose end is to be burned*” (*Heb. vi. 7–8*).

Could the fallen Priest be more graphically depicted? The rain of God’s grace has, indeed, fallen upon him, and fallen copiously. In return he has brought forth, not herbs meet to them, by whom he was cultivated, but instead of such produce he has brought forth only thorns and briers. What is the consequence? He is reprobate before God; the curse of the Almighty hovers over his head, and hell is the end that awaits him. Unhappy Priest! Better for him to have had his lot cast amongst the every-day labourers in the field, or even with the infidel, for he is included in the terrible sentence of St. Paul: “*It is impossible for those, who were*

once illuminated, have tasted the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, have, moreover, tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, and are fallen away, to be renewed again to penance, crucifying again to themselves the Son of God, and making a mockery of Him." Oh ! unfortunate fallen Priest ! do you not recognise yourself in this description ? You indeed, have been illuminated—you, indeed, have tasted the heavenly gift—you, indeed, have been made partaker of the Holy Ghost—you, indeed, have, moreover, tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, and, nevertheless, you have fallen away, and in doing so you have crucified again to yourself the Son of God, making a mockery of Him. What, then, is the result ? Impossible for you to be renewed again to penance—impossible—nothing more impossible—"nihil impossibilis," as St. Chrysostom would tell you. Of course, a miracle may overcome this impossibility. But how deplorable the case of a man, who has put himself out of the ordinary power of God's grace, and requires a miracle for a remedy ! Alas ! the sinner-Priest ! In his case we may employ the words of the Prophet, "*obstupescite caeli super hoc, et desolamini portae ejus vehementer*" (*Jer. ii. 12*).

But have we not had some experience ourselves, and have we not seen with our own eyes the difficulty of bringing back a poor Priest who had gone astray ? In his moments of reflection, and when alone by himself, he thinks over his sad condition, the height from which he has fallen, the depth into which he has precipitated himself. He contrasts the husks of swine with the bread the ser-

vants have in his Father's house ; he sighs and mourns ; he wrings his hair, and strikes his breast, and torrents of tears run down his cheeks. He makes up his mind to go to confession. He seems to be penitent, and the confessor believes him to be so the first and second time ; alas ! his contrition is not the contrition of grace. It is a mere natural sorrow resulting from his degraded state—resulting from his disgrace in the face of the world. Oh ! it is of such repentance St. Augustine exclaims : “*O poenitentes, sed non poenitentes.*” He stood on slippery ground “*lubricum in tenebris.*” He fell, and fell again, and could not be kept erect on his limbs. Unhappy man ! the sport and amusement of the devil, in these fitful efforts to rise. Yes, the sport and amusement of the devil, for, as the little boy sports, and amuses himself with the bird he has caught, allowing the poor thing to fly as far as the string will permit, by which his captor holds him fast, so the devil having this poor man bound fast in the bonds of sin, his evil habits, his criminal occasions, or some other ties of iniquity, plays with him, and exhibits him to the spirits of hell for their amusement, allowing him to rise in fitful efforts of fruitless repentance, and pulling him back again into the slavery of sin.

But, I may be asked, why lose time in speaking at such length of poor beings, whose case is so hopeless, who would need a miracle to lift them from their fallen state. I answer at once, and avow, that it is not for them I desire to speak so much as for those, who, through God's grace, hold themselves yet erect in their ministry.

O, let us not deceive ourselves. The warning comes from heaven : “*he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall*” (1 Cor. x. 12). This poor fallen Priest was once, and likely for a considerable time, regular and fervent, and if he has fallen, and we remain erect, to what is this difference owing ? St. Paul would tell us : “*gratia Dei, sum quod sum*” (1 Cor. xv. 10), a mystery warning us, and warning us Priests more than other men, that we must “*work out our salvation with fear and trembling*” (Philip ii. 12). It was not all at once that he, poor man, became what he is. His fall had its beginning, its progress, and its consummation ; and the evil one, who accomplished his ruin, is plotting the ruin of every individual Priest of God. “*Whence comest thou ?*” said the Lord to Satan. He replied, “*I have gone round about the earth, and walked through it.*” Whereupon the Lord asked him : “*Hast thou considered my servant Job ?*” (Job. i. 7.) His reply, and the sequel of what happened showed, that he knew Job, and all about him, as well as if he were the only one on earth to engage his attention, and that he had his plans in readiness for the ruin of the holy man as soon as the Lord would leave him free to attack him. In the same way, at the present day, this enemy of man’s salvation goes about incessantly, and he has his designs against each individual, as if concerned about him alone ; and he is more earnest in his hellish endeavours against the Priest of God than against other men, because in warfare the officers are more sought out to take them down than the rank and file ; and, as St. Chrysostom says, “*qui Pastorem de medio tulerit totum gregem dissipabit*”

(*Hom. I. in i. Tim.*). Yes, it cannot be too often repeated, “*he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall.*” “*Expertus loquor,*” says St. Augustine, “*experto crede: Vidi cedros Libani corruisse, de quorum sanctitate non magis quam de virtute Hieronymi dubitassem.*”

The fall of a fallen Priest is very seldom a sudden one. It begins by neglecting meditation. Hence his fervour cools, and his zeal becomes relaxed. He omits the daily examination of his conscience. Hence he becomes less vigilant, and, after a time, he becomes careless about the details of his conduct. He gives up his weekly confession, and prepares himself badly for it when he goes. His preparation for Mass, and his thanksgiving after Mass, are badly made, and as a consequence the Holy Sacrifice itself is badly celebrated. He is now unstrung in all that relates to his own sanctification, and from neglecting himself he begins to neglect the faithful. The duties of his ministry become distasteful to him, and he performs them in a perfunctory manner, sparing himself all the pains and labour, the mere holding of his position can absolutely dispense with. He cannot content himself at home. The pleasures of society and the good cheer of a well-laid table have their attractions for him. He talks, and jokes, and puns, and banters above any one in the company; and he keeps no account of the extent to which he has indulged himself in drink. Alas! he finds the pious author of the “*Imitation*” speaks from experience in saying, that “*sæpe lætus exitus tristem redditum parit, et laeta vigilia serotina triste mane facit (L. i. cap. 20).*

Yes, morning comes after an evening spent in dissipation. He has to say Mass. He would desire not to have to say it ; but he cannot avoid it. It is for him a necessity as being a public duty. A sad necessity ! His conscience is embarrassed ; but he must go to the Altar. Poor man ! But he pursues the career he has entered upon, and in course of time, and the time will not be long coming, the passions of corrupt nature are ready to take fire. All that is required for this purpose is the occasion ; and the occasion the devil is not slow in providing. The unhappy man falls. It has come on by degrees, and the greater the height from which he falls, the more deeply is he plunged into the mire. Recover that man now, bring him back, and renew him to penance. “*Impossible,*” says St. Paul. “*Nothing more impossible,*” says St. Chrysostom. What then ? The palsied man at “the Probatica,” could not of himself descend into the pool for his cure, nor could he find a man to put him into it. Our Saviour in His great mercy took compassion on him, seeing that he was suffering for eight-and-thirty years from his disease, and He cured him by a miracle. So may He cure and restore the fallen Priest ; but it must be by a miracle of grace, because he himself, palsied as he is in all the powers of his soul, can do nothing ; neither has he any man capable of applying the remedy he requires. Thus is it that the return from a state of sin to a state of grace is more difficult for a Priest than for any other man. Alas ! the fallen Priest. Alas ! Alas ! Alas !

We will now sum up what we have been saying on

this very sad, but very important subject. In the first place, we have seen that sin is more grievous in a Priest than in other men, on account of the greater knowledge, and consequently the greater malice with which he sins. In the second place, we have seen, that sin in a Priest is more grievous than in other men, on account of the ingratitude towards God involved in his guilt; in the third place we have seen that sin is more grievous in a Priest than in other men, on account of its opposition to the sanctity of his profession; and in the fourth place, we have seen, that a Priest has more difficulty than other men in rising out of a state of sin, and recovering the grace of God.

These are terrific truths; but we should make them salutary truths by laying them up in our souls. By keeping them in view, the Priest entering on his ministry may be guided in the way he should walk, to render himself more and more worthy of the vocation in which he has been called; whilst those who are advanced in their sacerdotal career may realise the blessing our Saviour promises to such as persevere to the end, "*qui perseveraverit usque in finem, hic salvus erit*" (Matt. x. 22).

VENIAL SIN IN A PRIEST.

“Qui spernit modica paulatim decidet” (Eccl. xix. 1).

In the considerations we have made on a Priest falling away from what he ought to be as a “*minister of Christ and dispenser of the mysteries of God,*” we have observed that his fall is not generally sudden, but results rather from a gradual decline of fervour, and a gradual setting in of relaxation, which prepares the way for his fall. It therefore follows, that the maxim “*principiis obsta,*” is a maxim of preservation for the Priest, if he is to lead a life in conformity with the sacred character with which he is invested. To act up to this maxim he is to maintain great delicacy of conscience not only as regards mortal sin, but even venial sin, and moreover, “*refrain from all appearance of sin,*” as the Apostle inculcates (*1 Thess. v. 22*). With this view it will be useful to bestow some consideration on the subject of venial sin, that we may thoroughly understand it, and with God’s grace resist it, as well as all temptations leading to the commission of it.

Our considerations shall range under three heads. In the first place, we shall consider venial sin in itself; in the second, we shall consider the delusion of mankind in the little concern they ordinarily take to themselves with regard to it; and, thirdly, we shall see the consequences it entails. May God grant us the assistance of His grace to understand the importance of our subject, and derive from the consideration of it the fruits it should produce in our souls.

VENIAL SIN CONSIDERED IN ITSELF.

By venial sin, venial though it is, we offend God. Now to offend God, the King of heaven and earth, the Lord and Master of the universe, is in itself a greater evil than all the temporal calamities we can imagine. To bring this home to our minds, let us consider a council of heavenly spirits discussing and estimating the evil of venial sin. What will they compare with it in order to illustrate its magnitude? They may think of wars, famines, and pestilences spread over the whole earth. They may think of the earth itself disturbed from its very centre, and its mountains cast into the bosom of the sea. They may think of the entire universe thrown into confusion, as it shall be on the last day, or absolutely annihilated. Beyond these evils, great though they would be, or any other temporal or material evils, these heavenly spirits see an incomparably greater evil in venial sin, for the simple reason that it is of lesser consequence that creation should perish than that the Creator be offended by any of His creatures, however light the offence may be regarded. How blind, therefore, are not we mortals, and how perverse, in making such little account of so enormous an evil, because, as we say, it is only a venial sin! How truly does the Psalmist say of us, "*vain are the sons of men, the sons of men are liars in the balances*" (*Ps. lxi. 10*)—that is, we form a wrong estimate of spiritual things, things relating to the honour of God and our salvation, when putting the concerns of this life, however great and important, in comparison with them.

Again, venial sin, venial though it is—there is no consideration that can justify it—nothing can make it lawful. Were there question of preserving our honour, our fortunes, our very lives, from ruin and destruction, or of averting the greatest imaginable calamities, or procuring the greatest imaginable advantages, there could be no excuse for committing the least venial sin. Nay, we may extend our suppositions, and imagine it in our power to enlarge the kingdom of God immeasurably here on earth, to spread the light of the Gospel amongst nations "*seated in darkness and the shadow of death,*" to convert millions of pagans and idolaters, and to procure for God the greatest amount of honour and glory—even for such considerations, vast though they would be, it would be still unlawful to tell a single lie, and God would say to us, rather let these poor pagans remain as they are, rather abandon the concern of My honour and glory, than commit a single solitary venial sin. O God of holiness, and Holiness itself, how different are Thy judgments from our judgments, but Thou art always just, and Thy judgments are always just and righteous.

Venial sin, venial though it is, can never enter the kingdom of heaven. This is a truth of Divine Faith. The declaration has come from the mouth of God Himself, "*non intrabit in eam aliquid coquinatum*" (*Apoc. xxi. 27*). O let us dwell a moment on this terrific truth. We may suppose a soul, that has spent a long life in the constant practice of the sublimest virtues, that has attained the highest degree of sanctity, that has accumulated stores of merits for heaven, and has, therefore, a

high place prepared for her amongst the saints of God, we may suppose that soul to leave this world bearing the stain of only one venial sin, be it of thought, word, deed, or omission, that soul cannot enter heaven. Holy though she is, laden with merits though she is, predestined to eternal glory though she is, with her name inscribed in the Book of Life, she must descend into Purgatory, and for that one venial sin she must undergo suffering, of which we have no conception here on earth—suffering so great, that the saints tell us that, if all the sufferings that have ever been endured here in this world, or shall be endured to the end of time, were accumulated on one individual victim, they would bear no comparison with the sufferings of Purgatory in their intensity ; and whilst their intensity is so great, they are lengthened out into a duration fearful to think of.

St. Vincent Ferrer, so enlightened in the things of the world to come, tells us that souls may have to suffer for a whole year in Purgatory for a single venial sin ; and St. Bridget, in her revelations, says, there are souls under sentence of being detained in those abodes of suffering until the Day of Judgment. Who can read without dismay what is mentioned in the life of St. Louis Bertrand respecting his own father? He was a good and pious man, and died a holy and happy death. Yet, after death, he appeared to his son in a state of terrible suffering, which he made appear by his sobs and sighs ; and he entreated of his son to do all he could to shorten his time, and mitigate his pains in Purgatory. The Saint's compassion for his poor father was excited to the highest degree. He

prayed, and said Mass constantly for him, and had all his brethren of the order, of which he was a member, to join him in prayer, and the oblation of the adorable Sacrifice. Nevertheless, the poor father used to appear to him, from time to time, showing the same signs of suffering. The saintly son redoubled his efforts to satisfy the Divine Justice on behalf of his suffering father, and, fearful to relate, it was only after eight years he obtained his release ! And what was the fault that was so dreadfully punished ? His son, enlightened as he was in the ways of God, thought over his father's life, and he could remember but one thing that challenged notice. It was an attachment too human that he had for a person of distinction, towards whom, nevertheless, he felt himself bound by obligations of gratitude for services he had received from him. But God is a jealous God, and will not allow a heart to be divided between creatures and Himself ; for, as St. Augustine says, “ we love God the less, when we love any one else, whom we love not in God, and for God.” Now, let us make the case of St. Louis Bertrand our own case, for there is no doubt we have friends, and likely near and dear friends, in Purgatory. Were they to appear to us, what an idea would they not give us of venial sin in the sufferings they have to endure on account of it ? and how would they not warn us to avoid the cause of the dreadful suffering they are undergoing ? O, let us not be cruel to ourselves. The present is a time of mercy. The God of mercy makes His sun shine on the good and bad alike, and His rains descend on the just and the unjust indiscriminately in this world, but the day is to

come, when mercy is to give way to justice, and then terrible experience will realise the dreadful truth, "*it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,*" even under the guilt of venial sin.

But God has not reserved all the punishment of venial sin for the world to come. He, sometimes, chastises it here on earth, and the severity of His chastisements gives us some idea of what venial sin is in the pure eyes of the God of all sanctity. Some of these chastisements are related in the Holy Scriptures, and are, therefore, vouched by God's own veracity. Mary, the sister of Moses, was guilty of murmuring against her brother. The sin was no more than a venial sin, yet the hand of God fell heavily upon her, and struck her from head to foot with a hideous leprosy.

Moses himself gave way to a momentary diffidence in God, as he struck the rock by God's command to take water from it in the desert. The fault did not exceed a venial sin, yet on account of it, his life was cut short, and he was not allowed to enter the Promised Land, for which his heart had so much yearned, after having suffered so much in conducting the people of God to it, for forty years through the desert.

The Bethsamites looked with curiosity, and without proper reverence, at the Ark of the Covenant, as it was being conveyed through their territory, and for this irreverence they paid the penalty of over fifty thousand of their population, whom the Lord slew on account of it.

Oza, the Levite, as we read, reached forth his hand, to prevent the Ark, as it would appear, from falling. It was only an act of rashness on his part, as the Scripture

asserts, yet on account of it he was struck dead by the hand of God on the spot.

David undertook to have his people numbered. He was actuated in so doing by some feeling more or less of vanity, which, however, cannot be said to have been more than a venial sin, yet God punished him by sending a pestilence amongst his subjects, that carried off no fewer than seventy thousand of them in a few days.

These are fearful chastisements, and, if we could enter into the secrets of God, we should, beyond doubt, discover that very many of the worst evils that scourge this world, public evils as well as private, are brought on by sins which are no more than venial. What, then, are we to conclude? Is it that God is unjust in punishing venial sin so heavily? Let us not be guilty of such a blasphemy. On the contrary, all the Saints affirm, that God in punishing us, deals out to us a measure short of what we deserve, whereas He rewards us with a measure beyond our deserts. No; we shudder at the dreadful punishments, with which God visits venial sin, because in our blindness we do not see or understand its magnitude in the sight of God, who, as Job tells us, "*has found wickedness in His Angels*" (*Job iv. 18*). O, let us beg of God "*to enlighten our eyes, that we may never sleep in death; lest at any time our enemy say, I have prevailed against them* (*Ps. xii. 4*).

THE LITTLE CONCERN OF MANKIND WITH RESPECT TO VENIAL SIN.

We proceed now to consider, what is most sad to consider, the little concern of mankind generally with

respect to venial sin. They commonly say in a tone of unconcern, it is *only* a venial sin, every one is guilty of venial sin, one should be an angel not a human being to avoid it, and they excuse themselves by various other reasons, or rather pretexts, which their self-love invents, thus "*making excuses in their sins*," according to the expression of the Psalmist (*Ps. cxl. 4*). We have, therefore, to bring ourselves to account, and see, that we do not deceive ourselves by pretences, which the justice of God will not admit, when we shall have to appear before His dread tribunal to be judged.

It is true, indeed, for theology teaches, that without a special grace of God we cannot escape venial sin altogether. Sad necessity, which has made the Saints of God on earth mourn for the frailty and corruption of our poor human nature, and made St. Paul in an agony of distress cry out: "*Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" (*Rom. vii. 24*).

But, abstracting from this case of exception, how frivolous, and utterly unsound are the excuses men ordinarily advance? They often say, when they have done wrong, "I really did not know it was wrong." But why did they not know it? Was it not in many instances from having neglected to instruct themselves? Was it not through a culpable forgetfulness of that knowledge of duty they should keep fresh in their minds, by revising, from time to time, what they had once learned? Was it not perhaps from indocility, being unwilling to receive correction? or was it not from presumption, relying on their own

lights, or what they call common sense, in matters where special knowledge is required? In these cases ignorance is no justification. Of course, as every one knows, invincible ignorance affords a valid excuse. But here there is no question of such ignorance, and one would practise a woful deception on himself, by taking refuge in such a plea in the cases supposed. How many sins, at least venial, are committed in this culpable kind of ignorance, God only knows; but the Day of Judgment "*which will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and reveal the secrets of hearts*" (*1 Cor. iv. 5*), will disclose them to the confusion of the poor sinner, who will then have to acknowledge his criminality.

Again, you excuse yourself by saying, "I really did not think—I did not advert." But why did you not think? Why did you not advert? Was it not for want of due circumspection? Was it not through a habit of levity you allow yourself? Was it not owing to the undue liberty you allow your tongue and heart in speaking of others, and thinking of others, and judging of others in a manner you would not like others to speak, think, or judge of you? or was it not through a vanity you refuse to control, and which employs your tongue in speaking of yourself, and what you do, instead of giving the glory to God, disregarding the maxim of the Apostle "*non enim qui seipsum commendat, ille probatus est, sed quem Deus commendat*" (*2 Cor. x. 18*). Here are venial sins in abundance. Will it justify you before God to say you did not think? You did not advert? The question comes back, Why not think? Why not advert? Do you examine your conscience

carefully every evening? Do you bring yourself to a serious account about the sources of your transgressions, as you prepare for confession? Do you remind yourself frequently of God's holy presence, whose all-seeing eyes are ever open to take account of our thoughts, words, and actions? Had you the same delicacy of conscience towards God, and the same fear of offending Him, as you have of displeasing a fellow-creature, who has authority over you to reward or punish you according to your deserts, you would watch over yourself with more caution and circumspection. O! that we had constantly in mind the warning of the Apostle "*Fratres, sobrii estote et vigilate; quia adversarius vester diabolus, tanquam leo rugiens circuit, quærens quem devoret*" (1 Pet. v. 8). This adversary of ours is always on the watch for our ruin, and why should not we be on the watch constantly against him to prevent his assaults upon us?

Again, you put forward the frailty of poor human nature as an excuse. But why so frail? Why so weak? Is it not because you give way to nature without any effort to resist its propensities or tendencies? Is it not because you refuse doing violence to yourself? Is it not because you are unwilling to subject yourself to any rule of conduct, to any restraint, or self-discipline? Do you not know, that the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and that according to the maxim laid down by the "Imitation of Christ," we advance in virtue only in proportion as we do violence to ourselves?" (*Lib. i. c. xxv*). Do you not know, and must you not admit, that you never had a temptation in all your life, and had

not, at the same time, grace to overcome it from Him, “*Who is faithful, and will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able?*” (1. Cor. x. 13.) Why, therefore, impose upon yourself by the pretext of frailty and the weakness of human nature? O, let us not deceive ourselves. We have to stand or fall before a Judge, who Himself has declared, that “*when He shall take a time, He will judge justices*” (Ps. lxxiv. 3); “*Who will search Jerusalem with lamps*” (Soph. i. 12); and before whose dread tribunal it is said, “*if the just man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner appear?*” (1 Pet. iv. 18.) O! let us bring ourselves to an account for these sins. There they are, numerous beyond the hairs of our head, and we have been deceiving ourselves by excuses, which we now see God will not admit, and which our own conscience reprobates as we are in His presence, and as we judge ourselves in the light of His Divine presence.

But we must not stop here. We must look beyond these sins of ignorance, but of ignorance without excuse, beyond these sins of inadvertence, which we should rather call carelessness and negligence, beyond these sins of frailty, as we term them, but which are the offspring of our sloth and supineness, beyond these various kinds of sin, for which we vainly flatter ourselves that we have some excuse to offer. How many venial sins do we not commit with full advertence, with full deliberation, with full reflection, with absolute malice, and against the reclamations and remonstrances of our conscience—and all this, every day, upon all occasions, so as to constitute settled habits of life, as if we really had made up

our minds to abide the consequences of the other world ? Alas ! what a blindness has come upon us ! The idea of hell has so cast a shadow over our souls, that we live on, as if, escaping hell, we had no reason to be concerned at all about sins, that do not deserve hell, overlooking the consideration, that every sin, however venial, is an offence against God, that nothing can justify it, that it has brought down upon this world the most fearful calamities, and that the supreme justice of God has reserved for its punishment a state of suffering exceeding, beyond comparison, all the sufferings of this life. O, should we not rise out of this fatal delusion ? and, instead of treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, should we not, on the contrary, shudder at the thought of being cast into that prison out of which, according to the warning words of our Blessed Lord, "*we shall not go out till we shall have paid the last farthing*" (*Matt. v. 26*).

CONSEQUENCES OF VENIAL SIN.

The consequences of venial sin may be summed up in one short but thrilling sentence, that it leads to mortal sin, as sickness of the body leads to death. Of this truth there is no room for doubt. The Holy Ghost Himself announces it in saying, "*qui spernit modica, paulatim decidet*" (*Eccl. xix. 1*). And we have the words of our Divine Saviour Himself conveying to us the same alarming oracle, as He says, "*qui in modico iniquus est, in majori iniquus est* (*Luke xvi. 10*), so that the truth has passed into a proverb admitting neither of controversy or doubt. We can, however, explain the transition as to how it takes place.

At first, or in the beginning, a Christian soul is horrified at the mere idea of falling into mortal sin. But venial sin destroys this salutary outpost. The tempter is allowed to approach by venial sin, and having a near view of him, we gradually become familiar with his deeds of wickedness. We advance, as we add sin to sin, keeping, as we would persuade ourselves, within our line of defence, the line separating venial from mortal sin, whilst he approaches the same line, but from the other side. Where is this line? It is invisible to human eye. It is not a material thing. It is a moral boundary consisting of more or less, and in this more or less what risk, what liability is there not of being deceived? The impostor is there, and poor human nature is here, and who shall be so rash as to flatter himself, that he will be able to stand against the deceit of one, who knows how to transfigure himself into an angel of light to deceive the children of men? In such a situation we are easily led to confound mortal with venial sin, and in the blindness of our self-love, and in the false view the devil presents to us, we mistake that to be only venial which is really a mortal offence before God. Had we retained a dread of venial sin, had we, according to the advice of the Apostle "*refrained ourselves from every appearance of evil,*" if the appearance of sin in every form were for us like the face of a serpent, we would fall back and escape. But all this has been done away with by venial sin, and thus venial sin leads us into mortal sin, and the words of the Holy Ghost are fatally verified, "*qui spernit modica paulatim decidet.*"

But the difficulty of discerning the line of separation between venial and mortal sin is not the only reason why venial leads to mortal sin. For, let us suppose, that we could discern the fatal boundary, there we stand on one side, and the tempter on the other, with the temptation in hand, to take us across. The boundary is not, as we have already observed, a material thing affording us material security. It is a moral rampart depending on our own poor free will—on our love of virtue and hatred of vice. But venial sin has long since weakened this security, and then, weak as we are, or rather weakness itself, can we imagine we shall remain firm in the moment of temptation, especially when there is question of sins, where natural corruption, or corrupt nature, is temptation enough of itself, and apart from the advantage we put into the hands of the enemy? In a danger so critical we stand in need of more than an ordinary protection from God—we require special and altogether particular graces. But what right have we to such graces? Any right we might have had, we have forfeited, for, in the order of God's Providence, and in the dispensation of His graces, it is with Him a rule to refuse or withhold, on account of venial sin, the particular graces He may have destined for us, and with the aid of which we might secure our salvation; whereas by His withholding these special graces we yield to grievous temptation, as it occurs, and in this way venial sin leads to mortal, and by that means becomes for us, venial though it be, the cause of our reprobation—the remote cause, indeed, but no less certain cause of our reprobation.

It is related in the life of St. Teresa, that although she never was guilty of mortal sin, still she had a vision of a place the devil had prepared for her in hell, not surely on account of her venial sins, but on account of the mortal sins to which they would inevitably lead her, had she not risen to a higher degree of fervour, and to a sanctity of life inconsistent even with venial sin.

The experience of all times bears us out in our position, that venial sin leads to mortal, as sickness leads to death. Cassian explains the process by a very fit comparison. A house, he says, does not usually fall all at once. A gutter gets out of repair, the water streams in, the timber rots, the cement is dissolved, the masonry gives way, and so, in the end, the house falls. It was the flaw or chink first in the gutter, which was in itself a small matter, and afterwards the rain entering, from time to time, and in a small quantity each time, that brought the house to ruin in the end; so it is venial sin after venial sin, that leads the soul to spiritual ruin or mortal sin, and the devil succeeds better for his own hellish purposes by this way of acting; for, if at first he should tempt us to mortal sin, we would repel the temptation with horror, but insinuating himself by little and little by means of venial sin, he in the end effects a complete entrance into our souls. It is on this account St. Gregory affirms, that in a certain sense small temptations, and light faults, are more dangerous than greater ones (*Greg. 3, Past. adm. 34*); and St. Chrysostom in the same view of the subject says, “I dare advance a proposition, which will appear strange

and unheard of. It seems to me, that men ought to be less vigilant in flying from great sins, than in avoiding small faults, for the enormity of great sins naturally excites us to a horror of them, but we are easily induced to commit little faults, because we fancy them not to be considerable, and the little account we take of them preventing us from endeavouring to correct them, they become at last so great by our negligence, that we are no longer able vigorously to resist them, and put a stop to them" (*Hom. 87 sup. Matt.*) St. Augustine, laying down the same teaching by way of comparison, says, "it is no matter whether a ship be sent to the bottom by one great wave, or whether the water entering gradually by the chinks, and not being pumped out, at length sinks the vessel" (*Aug. Epist. 118, de silen.*); and on this account, in another place, the holy Doctor makes the reproach: "You are armed and prepared to defend yourselves against great sins; but what care do you take to avoid small faults? Are you not afraid of them also? You have already thrown overboard these heavy bales, which would have sunk your ship; take care that the small heap of sand, still in the hold, do not bring you down" (*Sup. Ps. xxxix. 13*).

From these passages of such great servants of God, and luminaries in God's Church, we see that venial sin not only leads to mortal, but that it is to be more dreaded in a certain sense, because it is by venial sin generally, that the devil draws souls into mortal sin, and secures them in his possession.

And the devil having thus gradually drawn the soul

by venial into mortal sin, how is she to recover God's grace, and reinstate herself in His friendship? The task is a difficult one, vastly more difficult, than if she had fallen, at once, by some violent temptation. The difference is like that, which a physician meets with between a patient suffering from some acute illness, and another in consumption. Of the former he has hopes, and the fever once past, the patient recovers in a short time by the natural energies he retains. Not so with the patient in consumption. The natural powers are gone in his case, and a complete renewal of the constitution, which cannot be expected, should be necessary for his recovery. So it is between the two sinners in question, the sinner who, yielding to some violent temptation has fallen at once into grievous sin, and the sinner who, step by step, has been led on to the same unhappy result by venial sin. The Divine Physician is required in both cases; but the poor man who has suddenly fallen requires only to be once again, so to say, set on his legs, and he walks on immediately, and with steadiness in the way of God's Commandments; whereas the other, who has come to fall into mortal sin by a habit of venial sin, has, even when he recovers God's grace, his hands hanging down, and his knees enfeebled, and his whole moral system unstrung—in other words, his entire moral constitution is so borne down, that he must have long to struggle before he recovers the vigour and tone of which venial sin had deprived him.

Are we, therefore, to say that venial sin is worse than

mortal? God forbid. But what we conclude is, that in the contrivances, which the devil uses, he is ordinarily more sure of success, especially with certain persons—persons engaged in God's service, by temptations to venial, than by temptations to mortal sin in the beginning, and therefore their security must be to resist the beginnings, and not make light of anything in which there is sin, however venial it may be.

What reasons, therefore, has not the Priest of God to take account of venial sins, above all if habitual, and of the sources from which they come? There are three sources especially that call for his particular attention. The first, and by far the most prolific of these sources, is an undisciplined tongue. When a Physician comes to visit a patient, he ordinarily asks to see his tongue; and judges of the disease from the appearance it presents. It is very much the same in the diseases of the soul. The tongue indicates the state of spiritual health in which we are. The Apostle St. James says, "*If any man think himself religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain*" (*Jas. i. 26*): and, in another place, he says, "*in many things we all offend. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man*" (*iii. 2*). The Apostle lays down the alternative: you have your tongue under discipline, or you have not. If you have, you are a perfect man; if you have not, it is in vain for you to pretend to be religious.

Our own experience is in perfect harmony with the Apostle's teaching. When we see a man with a well-

disciplined tongue, we do not want to know anything more about him ; we conclude he is a holy man. On the contrary, when we meet a man, who has no restraint on his tongue, we conclude he is unguarded in every other way as well, and so leaves himself open to be assailed by every coming temptation. Therefore, the Apostle, after enumerating various evils of the tongue, calls it "*a fire, a world of iniquity placed amongst our members, defiling the whole body, and inflaming the wheel of our nativity, being set on fire by hell*" (Jas. iii. 6). What a source, therefore, of venial sin, and too often even of mortal sin, is not the tongue ? Therefore, we are prepared to hear from the lips of our Divine Lord the sentence, which will regulate His judgment when we shall stand before His terrible tribunal, "*ex verbis tuis justificaberis, et ex verbis tuis condemnaberis. Dico, enim, vobis, quoniam omne verbum otiosum, quod locuti fuerint homines, reddent rationem de eo in die judicii*" (Matt. xii. 36, 37).

The next great source of venial sin is a want of due restraint at table, and elsewhere, in eating and drinking. St. Paul gives no quarter in this matter. "*If,*" says he, "*you live according to the flesh, you shall die. But if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live*" (Rom. viii. 13). Here are life and death set before us, and life and death eternal, and the one, or the other, depends on the restraint we put on the animal appetite in eating and drinking. This is the A, B, C, of a virtuous life according to the unanimous teaching of spiritual men. "*Refraena gulam,*" says the

“Imitation of Christ,” “*et omnem carnis inclinationem facilius fraenabis*” (*Lib. i., cap. xix.*) Let me not be understood as alluding here to gross excesses. We are considering venial sin at present, and the sources whence it takes its rise, and there is no doubt but that we shall be guilty of venial sin, and several venial sins, every day of our lives, unless we keep ourselves under discipline as to our animal appetite for eating and drinking beyond the requirements of nature. In the matter of drink, our rule as to the quantity we are to allow ourselves should be unyielding, and within the limits of the strictest temperance ; and we should have nothing less than a horror of private sipping out of meals—a habit sure to prove fatal to any one who indulges in it, making him a drunkard, as it were, by stealth, and without his perceiving the vice growing upon him, till it gets into his nervous system, and becomes in itself a disease most difficult of cure—so difficult, indeed, as that it may be said with little exaggeration to be incurable.

I term this appetite for eating and drinking an *animal* appetite, for we must stoop down to the acknowledgment, that it is common to us and the poor brute ; and, what is still more humiliating, brute though he is, we have to learn a lesson from him in this matter. The poor brute restrains himself by instinct, and we by reason ; and it is our reproach, that his instinct is a better restraint to him than our reason to us. This is what made St. Chrysostom compare the intemperate man to the ass or the dog, “*melior est asinus, præ-*

tantior est canis," says the holy Doctor, after which he continues, "when these poor animals have eaten and drunk what satisfies the demands of nature, a thousand men could not force them to eat or drink more." And with us, what becomes of what we eat and drink beyond the due requirements of health? St. Thomas, the Angel of the School, would tell us, as all moral teaching tells us, that it goes to foment the corruption of our nature, to throw oil upon the fire, which of itself is only too ready to burst out in our mortal members. O, that we had the lesson deeply impressed on our souls, which the "Imitation of Christ" would teach us in saying, "major labor est resistere vitiis et passionibus, quam corporalibus insudare laboribus" (*Lib. 1. xxv.*) We would, then, with the Apostle, "*chastise these bodies of ours, and bring them into subjection; lest, perhaps, when we have preached to others, we ourselves should become castaways*" (*1 Cor. ix. 27.*) Yes, we must treat these bodies of ours as deadly enemies, for the "Imitation," speaking again on this subject, assures us, that "we cannot have a more troublesome or worse enemy than our own body, if it be not subject to the spirit," that is to the control of reason and religion (*L. iii. ch. xiii.*).

I heard a venerable Bishop of long experience say one time what quite surprised me, and appeared to me a paradox for the moment. "I verily believe," said his Lordship, "that several become drunkards without being guilty of mortal sin till they are enslaved to the habit;" and then he described the furtive advances, the stolen marches, by which the habit gains ground, till it has

quite got possession of its victim. It begins, it progresses, and it finishes, by sipping out of meal times. The working priest has occasions in abundance. The call of duty takes him out, and often to a distance, in all kinds of weather, and as well by night as by day. He deems it, or is tempted to deem it, necessary to take something in order to resist the danger of catching cold. He has to attend all sorts of patients, and thinks he should secure himself against contagion by taking something. He comes home fatigued and cold, and again thinks he should take something. He has to pay visits here and there, and his friends press him to take something, as he goes along. All these occasions are of daily occurrence, and all these somethings soon bring on a habit, and in this way the poor man is caught imperceptibly, and victimized. Who could say that during the process he was guilty of more than venial sin? but who has not seen the lamentable result? There is no vice, to which poor humanity is liable, that requires to be guarded against at a greater distance, than the degrading vice of intemperance. The rule of dealing with ourselves is that laid down by the Apostle, "*si esurierit inimicus tuus, ciba illum; si sitit, potum da illi*" (*Rom. xii. 20*). Yes, "*ciba illum*," but no pampering; "*potum da illi*," so far as health or the reasonable demands of nature require. No more; this is just charity towards an enemy, and going beyond this would be, as if we forgot that we were dealing with our worst and most troublesome foe, as the "*Imitation*" so emphatically asserts.

The third source, from which venial sin ordinarily comes, is an abuse of time, or, to speak subjectively, sloth. A lazy animal of any kind is an ugly object to look at, but a lazy Priest is a particularly uninteresting being to fix our eyes upon. There is no man more out of his proper character, than an indolent Priest. By profession he is a workman, a labourer in God's vineyard. He cannot excuse himself by saying "*nemo me conduxit*" (*Matt. xx. 7*). The work is there before him. His time from morning till night is due to his good Master, who is looking on, but will not reward him, if he squander his day in doing nothing, or next to nothing.

But what should concern him particularly is that misspending his time is not only an evil in itself, but is the parent and teacher of evil. It is a maxim, which God Himself lays down, "*multam malitiam docuit otiositas*" (*Eccli. xxxiii. 29*). Let us look at the matter practically. There is a Priest, for example, beginning his day. He has remained in bed till he got tired of it, or until some unavoidable duty forced him out of it. He makes a short hurried morning prayer, but no meditation. No Mass, unless obliged by necessity, and then what sort of preparation before, what a hurry through, and scarcely any thanksgiving after? He breakfasts, and spends so much time over the newspaper, after which seated on his easy chair he stretches out his arms, and makes the room resound with a loud-sounding yawn. Now the great question is, how to pass the day? He thinks of such and such families,

that he has not visited since such a time. He thinks of taking a turn amongst them, and kill so much time, which will help him so far through the day. But his own time is come to receive the visits of his friends. Such a person comes, and as she leaves, another succeeds, who in turn leaves room for a third, for tattlers are never wanting. How much time has he now thrown away, time that he owed to his ministry? and what frivolous conversations largely intermixed with detraction, and censoriousness towards others, and flattery towards himself, which his friends know to be so acceptable to his vanity. Mid-day has now come, and he sets out on his round of visits. Half an hour here, and half an hour there. The father and mother are about their business, but the young people appear. With them serious conversation would be out of place, and grave manner would be downright rudeness. Badinage is, therefore, the order of the day, and so the visit begins, and so it goes on, and so it ends. Of course there has been a glass of sherry and some biscuit. The first visit puts him in humour for a second, and a second for a third, and so the day passes on. He comes home, throws himself on the sofa, and after putting over him a fit of laziness, he thinks of his Office, which he has barely time to recite in a hurried way, till it is the hour to prepare to go out to dine, where he has been invited. He falls in with a mixed company, and is quite at home. He may have to lead the conversation, or take a prominent part in it. It is sometimes pleasant, and in every way social, but sometimes it may take a disputa-

tious turn. His temper is not the best, and he cannot well stand contradiction. He gets into a stormy altercation, in which he wounds the feelings of those he contradicts, and disedifies all present. He has eaten and drunk like every one else at table, and perhaps more than several, and he comes home after having spent his day as described. But now comes the account of conscience. He takes a look back—a vague, superficial look back on the day. He sees no mortal sin in anything he said or did, and he retires to begin to-morrow as he spent to-day. What are we to say of such a Priest? St. Augustine would speak for us, and say, “*Nihil esse, quidem, in hâc vitâ facilius et laetius, et hominibus acceptabilius Presbyteri officio, si perfunctoriè res agatur*”—yes, “*in hâc vitâ,*” nothing more quiet, nothing more pleasant, nothing more acceptable to mortals, than the office of a Priest, if he discharge it in a lazy, negligent way ; but, adds the Saint, “*apud Deum nihil miserius, nihil tristius, nihil damnabilius*” (*Epist. ad Valerium*). Yes, this is what sloth and idleness come to : “*nihil miserius, nihil tristius, nihil damnabilius apud Deum.*” So, again and again, venial sin leads to mortal, as sickness leads to death, and the words of the Holy Ghost are again and again realized, “*qui spernit modica, paulatim decidet.*” How salutary, therefore, is the advice of the “*Imitation*” in saying “*Nunquam sis ex toto otiosus, sed aut legens, aut scribens, aut orans, aut meditans, aut aliquid utilitatis pro communi laborans*” (*Lib. i. ch. 19*). No man the devil is better pleased to come across, than a slothful idle man ; and

as “*he goes round the earth, and walks through the middle of it,*” as he says of himself in the Book of Job, he is sure to pounce on such a man, as he falls in with him, confident of making easy prey of him. O, if full of the spirit of our calling we could say with St. Paul : “*Ego autem libentissime impendam, et superimpendar ipse pro animabus vestris*” (2 Cor. xii. 15), we would have no spare time on our hands, and we would dry up a teeming source of venial sin certain to end in mortal.

CONCLUSION.

We now see what a serious subject venial sin is—that being an offence against God it exceeds all temporal evils—that it excludes from the kingdom of heaven, subjecting the sinner to suffering in the other world, in comparison with which the greatest sufferings in this life scarcely deserve the name, and that it brings down, from time to time, fearful chastisements, not only on individuals, but whole nations here below. We have seen how numerous these venial offences are, and the false pretences, whereby the sinner would fain excuse himself. We have seen how they lead to mortal sin, and do so in such a way as to render the return to fervour in God’s service peculiarly difficult; and we finally took a cursory view of the sources from which they ordinarily spring. What remains but to enter into judgment with ourselves on a matter, that so seriously interests us—with which our salvation is so intimately bound up. In correcting ourselves we shall have a long warfare on hands. We shall

have to subject ourselves to strict discipline, and exercise a careful vigilance over all the details of our conduct. We must especially have some order in our duties, which will make out useful employment in accordance with our vocation for every hour of the day, so that raising our hearts on high, we may be able to say to God, "*ordinatione tuâ perseverat dies, quoniam omnia serviunt tibi*" (*Ps. cxviii. 91*). By doing so we may hope, with the aid of Divine grace, instead of falling by little and little, to advance from virtue to virtue, according to the maxim of the Holy Ghost, "*qui justus est, justificetur adhuc, et sanctus, sanctificetur adhuc*" (*Apoc. xxii. 11*). It is with a view to so blessed a result, that the following rule of life has been drawn up for the observance of Priests in the secular ministry, especially of young Priests, who, on leaving college, stand so much in need of guidance to pursue a course of life, whereby "*they may show themselves,*" according to the exhortation of St. Paul, "*in all things an example of good works, in doctrine, in integrity, in gravity, the sound word, that cannot be blamed, that he, who is on the contrary part, may be afraid, having no evil to say of us*" (*Tit. ii. 8*).

TEPIDITY IN A PRIEST.

“Scio opera tua, quia neque frigidus es, neque calidus; utinam frigidus esse, aut calidus! Sed quia tepidus es, et nec frigidus, nec calidus, incipiam te evomere ex ore meo.” (Apoc. iii., 15, 16.)

These are thrilling words, and merit well the serious consideration of God's minister, for it is to a minister of God, our Divine Lord addresses them.

Tepidity may be regarded under a threefold aspect in a Priest: first, in reference to the Priest himself, secondly, in reference to the faithful under his charge, and thirdly in reference to God, and the Divine Service.

TEPIDITY IN A PRIEST IN REFERENCE TO HIMSELF.

Tepidity is a disease of the soul like paralysis or palsy in the body. The poor man at the Probatice was so disabled, that, though at the water's edge, he had not command of his limbs to descend into the pond, when he saw it stirred by the Angel; and the paralytic, who was let down from the roof of the house, where Jesus was preaching, could not move hand or foot himself. Somewhat in the same way the tepid Priest has the energies of his soul relaxed, so as to be almost incapable of all vital action, and, whilst the fervent Minister of God runs, according to the expression of the Psalmist, in the way of God's Commandments, he remains in a miserable state of lethargy and supineness.

But the tepid Priest did not come to this sad state

all at once. He may have entered on his ministry with all the fervour a pious ecclesiastic takes with him from the Seminary, where he had been educated. He made his meditation regularly for half an hour every morning, and, as long as he did, there was no cooling down of his fervour. After a time, however, he became irregular in this holy exercise, sometimes performing it, and sometimes omitting it, till in the end he abandoned it altogether. Immediately he began to experience the fatal consequences. His faith soon commenced to fail exerting its vivifying and invigorating influence upon him, and his charity waxed cold, so that he felt no longer the same relish for the functions of his ministry, and he ceased to derive from their performance the comfort and support he was previously accustomed to experience.

In the beginning he used to go to confession every week, and if perchance any disappointment occurred, he was sure not to allow a second week to pass, regarding Penance not merely as a sacrament, but as a means, moreover, for good and holy souls to become more and more perfect, according to the Divine maxim, "*he that is holy let him be sanctified still*" (*Apoc. xxii. 11*). But, in course of time, this view gave way to the bare rule of necessity, according as he might feel his conscience burdened with mortal guilt, till he became one of the number, of whom St. Augustine would say: "O poenitentes non poenitentes, sed illusores."

He had been in the habit of examining his conscience every night, thereby judging himself, that, according to St. Paul, he might escape being judged (*1 Cor. xi. 31*).

But, after some time, this holy exercise became irksome, and falling into a slovenly way of performing it, he in the end gave it up altogether.

When in College he was in the habit, in company with his fellow-students, to pay a formal visit, every day, to the most Holy Sacrament, and he was taught to regard this homage to his "*hidden God*" not as a mere rule of College life, but as the beginning of the life-long personal and intimate familiarity he was to maintain with Him in this great mystery of love. Time though passed on, and having already relinquished the habit of meditation, his faith ceased to be practically the "*argumentum non apparentium*" to him. Hence a fatal negligence has overtaken him as to the guardianship of the Blessed Sacrament, so that, although possessing this heavenly treasure even under his roof, he neglects paying to it any act of special devotion from morning till night, and as a consequence he celebrates the Holy Sacrifice only as he cannot avoid it, and as if dragged to the altar.

Spiritual reading was a daily practice with him during his years in College, and for some time longer or shorter after he had entered on his sacred ministry he kept it up, and whilst he did, he felt himself in the company, so to say, of the pious authors, whose works he read. But this companionship became too great a restraint on his liberty, and now he would not look at a spiritual book as long as he has a newspaper, or some ephemeral reading to engage him.

Behold this poor man—"quantum mutatus ab illo ! Oh, *quomodo obscuratum est aurum, mutatus est color*

optimus" (*Thren.* iv. 1). But how does he himself feel the change? And what are the reproaches of his conscience? Alas; reproaches! On the contrary, he justifies himself. He says, "I do not, indeed, aspire to perfection. I do not see any obligation under pain of sin of performing any of these devotions that I have fallen away from. There are, to be sure, many better Priests, but there are also many not so good." Thus does he excuse himself. Nay, in his self-esteem he blindly takes credit for virtues, of which he has only the mere shadow, as if accomplishing all justice. But there is a voice that would say to him from on High : "*I know thy works, thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot, but because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich and made wealthy, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked.*" (*Apoc.* iii. 15, 16, 17.) Alas! where is the remedy? The Holy Ghost would tell him, "*be mindful, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and do penance, and the first works; or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou do penance*" (*Ibid.* ii. 5).

THE TEPID PRIEST IN REFERENCE TO THE FAITHFUL UNDER HIS CHARGE.

In this respect also tepidity usually comes on by degrees. Having been duly called to the Ministry a Priest generally brings to his work the high and holy sentiments a true sacerdotal zeal inspires. He feels how the Good Shepherd should be ever ready to lay

down his life for his sheep. He looks to his great Model, and admires how this Saviour of men went about preaching the Kingdom of God everywhere, on the hill-top, and the plain, as well as in the towns and villages, sometimes to numerous audiences, and sometimes to a few individuals, and looking to this Divine example he applies to himself the maxim, "*I have given you an example, that as I have done you do likewise*" (*John xiii. 15*).

He has also before his mind the example of the Apostles, and admires their unbounded zeal "*in not counting their lives more precious than themselves, so that they might consummate their course, and the ministry of the Word, they had received from the Lord Jesus to testify the Gospel of the grace of God*" (*Acts xx. 24*), and he sees how "*They most gladly spent and respent themselves for the souls of the faithful*" (*2 Cor. xii. 15*), and finally laid down their lives in the service of their Divine Master.

He may further have edified himself in reading the lives of the Apostolic men of all ages, who, "*powerful in work and word*," left after them examples to be imitated by good and zealous workmen in the vineyard of the Lord for all times to come.

But not content with admiring these edifying examples he may have said to himself, "*should not I endeavour to imitate them, at least at an humble distance, and according to the measure of the giving of Christ*" (*Ephes. iv. 7*). He may accordingly have inflamed his soul with that Divine fire our Blessed Lord came to cast upon the earth to inflame the hearts of mankind.

He looked over the length and breadth of the parish in which he may have been placed, and felt he was a “*debtor*” to every single soul of the several thousands composing the population. He, therefore, preached “*in season and out of season*.”

He was particularly attentive “*to the lambs*” of the fold, the little ones of Christ. He prepared them with all his zeal for Confirmation and first Communion, feeling how much their after-life was to depend on these two Sacraments. He was assiduous in hearing Confessions, persuaded that it was by his work in the holy tribunal of Penance he was to reap the fruit of his other labours.

The poor had a large share in his ministry, and he treated them as a privileged class, recollecting our Saviour’s words, “*blessed are the poor*” (*Matt. v. 3*).

He visited the sick again and again in order to secure to them a happy passage to Eternity.

In his general manner he went about in all mildness and gentleness. “*The old man he rebuked not, but entreated him as a father, the young man as a brother, the old woman as a mother, and the young woman as a sister in all chastity*” (*1 Tim. v. 12*).

Whilst thus absorbed in his ministry he might have taken a look now and then over the field of politics, and said to himself, “Whatever reasons may be advanced *pro* and *con* in such matters, I, for my own part, will wait awhile. I see how young Priests by premature mixing in politics get themselves into trouble, and soon find reasons for repenting that they had plunged themselves so soon into matters of the kind.”

ENCHIRIDION CLERICORUM.

Such was many a young Priest in the outset of his career. But time rolls on, and he experiences in himself the truth of St. Leo's words, that souls the most virtuous become soiled with the dust of the world by contact with it: "de mundano pulvere sordescunt." (*Serm. iv. de quadrag.*)

Besides his contact with the world he must be the personal companion, in his every-day life, of brother Priests, who, perhaps, have already fallen away into relaxed habits, and he may have to suffer ridicule and raillery at their hands. Difficulties and annoyances of various kinds cross his path. Human respect says to him, that he ought not to be singular, that he should be like others. Poor human nature lends its aid to these sinister influences from without, and the devil has only too great an interest of his own in taking the ground from under a man, who is snatching so many souls from his infernal grasp. The poor man becomes disconcerted, and he begins to think, that after all it is too much, that it has even the air of presumption, to be out of line with others. The bracings of his good resolutions begin to slacken, and he enters on the beaten track, or rather on the inclined plain. The fire within commences cooling down, and the results become apparent in his several public duties.

But we must follow him in his downward career. His health becomes unsatisfactory, and he gets afraid of breaking down. Of course a physician must be consulted, and the physician looking at the case from his own point of view, raises all sorts of difficulties about late Masses, and Mass every day. He tells him about the confes-

sional, that it cuts short the lives of Priests, that preaching every Sunday, especially if it be before breakfast, must break down any constitution. He further descants on the other duties of the ministry, laying particular stress on sick calls, and points out danger in every direction. After these several warnings the physician may say in the end, “On the whole, Sir, there is nothing serious the matter for the present, but you have not been a day too soon in looking to your health, and seeking medical advice. You are suffering only from a certain depression of your system, and the best advice I can give you is to get out of work for some little time, and then, when you will have regained your strength, you must moderate your duties.”

The prescriptions of the physician are oracles to the patient, and acting upon them he becomes a valetudinarian for the rest of his days. His health is his “*alpha*” and “*omega*” thenceforth; it is the first and last of his concerns, and his sad position is, that whilst it is desirable for the public good in the interest of souls, that the days of his years should come to an early end, his whole mind is occupied in thinking how he can prolong them. Then comes to pass the curse of the Prophet, “*Vae pastoribus Israel; woe to the shepherds of Israel. They have fed themselves. Should not the flocks be fed by the shepherds? . . . But I shall require my flock at their hands*” (*Ezec. xxxiv. 2, 10*). Yes, the Supreme Pastor is looking down from on High, and already does he pronounce the sentence, “*Incipiam te evomere ex ore mea.*” “*Incipiam.*” Yes, the tepid Priest is in an incipient state of reprobation. But will he not

descend to a lower depth, to a state of complete reprobation? Alas! tepidity does not remain stationary. The causes that have brought him so far downwards will bring him to the bottom. Insensibility sets in, the searing of conscience respecting the souls committed to his care comes on as if by a natural process, and then comes to pass the terrible anomaly, which made St. Bernard cry out with horror in his day: “*Mira res . . . cadit asina, et est qui sublevet; perit anima, et nemo est, qui reputet*” (*St. Bernard de consid.* 1, 4, c. 6).

THE tepid PRIEST IN REFERENCE TO GOD AND THE DIVINE SERVICE.

The Almighty Himself asks the question, “*Si pater ego sum, ubi est honor meus? Si Dominus ego sum, ubi est timor meus?*” (*Mal. i. 6.*) How is the tepid Priest to answer? How can he say, “*Domine dilexi decorem domus tuae, et locum habitationis gloriae tuae*” (*Ps. xxv. 8*), as he looks at the state of his church, with its stain-spotted walls, its broken windows, the roof letting in the rain, and the floor unswept, and broken up in different parts? Let him examine his sacristy. His vestments are in a tossed-about state, and some of them so worn as to be unfit for use. His Albs and other linens have not been washed for a length of time, and even the Corporal “*ad involvendum corpus Domini*”—yes, absolutely the Corporal is not only soiled, but from its not having been carefully purified, contains numerous sacred particles in its folds!

Special devotions he does not, of course, encourage.

The frequentation of the sacraments quite annoys him. Sodalities and confraternities to give good example, and promote piety amongst the population are, he considers, very troublesome, and he will not have them. He is satisfied to go on in the old track of the past, when, he would pretend, the people were better than at present.

As to public functions, he performs, because he cannot help performing, such as are essential, but his ungraceful and undignified bearing, his hurried and mumbling enunciation only too plainly indicate how little mindful he is, that what he is doing engages the attention of heaven at the moment, and applies to the souls of men the fruits of the adorable Mystery of Calvary. Oh ! what reason has not the God of Majesty to complain, “*Si Pater ego sum, ubi est honor meus ? Si Dominus ego sum, ubi est timor meus ;*” and how painful is it not to see the great ones of this world so well honoured and served, whilst “*the King of Kings and Lord of Lords*” is so negligently served by the Ministers of His Sanctuary ? O tepid Priest, why will you not be aroused from your lethargy ? Do you not hear the dreadful words, “*Quia tepidus es, incipiam te evomere ex ore meo ?*”

CONCLUSION.

We have considered the vice of tepidity in a Priest under the various aspects we proposed to ourselves, as it regards himself, as it regards the faithful committed to his charge, and finally as regards Almighty God, and the Divine Service, and we have seen that it is a most disastrous vice in each of these respects. What then is

the remedy, or rather what is the antidote to be employed, for, alas! a remedy is scarcely to be hoped for, if the disease has become confirmed. The maxim “Sero medicina paratur” has then, unfortunately, its strict application. Therefore let our inquiry be, how are we to prevent so fatal a malady? We find the answer in the words of the Holy Ghost: “*He that feareth God neglecteth nothing*” (*Eccle.* vii. 19)—nothing as to his own sanctification, nothing as to his duties towards the faithful committed to his charge, nothing as to his obligations towards God and the Divine Worship. How much should we not desire this holy fear, and what should we not do to maintain so salutary a sentiment in the midst of our heart. We cannot fail to do so, if, with God’s blessing, we keep constantly before our minds the following five points, which I will merely indicate here, as I shall further on have occasion to speak of them more at large. These are, 1, the dignity of the sacerdotal office; 2, the grievousness of sin in a Priest; 3, the difficulty of his conversion; 4, the severity of the punishment awaiting him; and 5, the small number of those who are saved. May God in His Mercy maintain constantly in our minds these thrilling considerations, and preserve us by their salutary influence from the evil of tepidity.

A RULE OF LIFE FOR A PRIEST, AS TO CERTAIN ESSENTIAL POINTS.

THE NECESSITY OF SUCH A RULE.

“Ordinatione tuâ perseverat dies” (*Ps. cxviii. 91*).

“Illum tantum diem vixisse te computa, quem sine ullâ Regulæ transgressione duxisti” (*St. Eucherius*).

“Rogo vos Fratres, et multum obsecro, sic agite et sic state in Domino, dilectissimi, semper circa custodiam ordinis, ut ordo custodiat vos” (*St. Bernard*).

“O Jugum sancti amoris, quâm dulciter capis, gloriosè laqueas, suayiter promis, delectantè oneras.” (*Idem*.)

“Rogamus vos, et obsecramus in Domino Jesu, ut in exactam ipsarum regularum observationem incumbatis; pro certo habentes, quòd si illas servaveritis, ipsæ vos servabunt; et tandem ad finem optatum, hoc est, ad Coelestem Beatitudinem, securos vos deducent” (*St. Vincent de Paul*).

On leaving his seminary, and entering on his ministry, the young Priest should be penetrated with the reflection that thousands of ecclesiastics before him had spent a fervent seminary career, and prepared themselves with all diligence and zeal for their high and holy calling, that they had gone into the vineyard of the Lord firmly resolved, with the Apostle, “gladly to spend themselves and be spent,” as good and faithful workmen, promoting the honour and glory of their heavenly Master, by toiling alike for the salvation of souls, and their own sanctification, and who, neverthe-

less, fell away from their good purposes into lamentable irregularities.

Of how many unhappy ecclesiastics, at every period of the Church, has not our Divine Lord had reason to renew the complaint, "*Scio opera tua, quia nomen habes quod vivas, et mortuus es. Non enim invenio opera tua plena coram Deo meo?*" (*Apoc. iii. 1, 2*). It is of these lamentable falls that St. Augustine would warn every young Priest entering on his ministry, in the following appeal : "*Experto crede, expertus loquor, vidi cedros Libani turpitè corruisse, de quorum sanctitate non magis, quam de Hieronymi virtute, dubitassem.*"

Such experience should be a thrilling lesson : and to sum up the various causes of such disasters, they can all be traced to either of two original sources, that those who have gone astray left their seminary without proposing to themselves any definite rule of life, or, proposing to themselves such a rule, they fell away from its observance. Therefore, there is nothing, that a young Priest should impress more deeply on his mind than the conviction, that, to live up to the obligations of his holy state, he must bring with him a rule of life into his ministry, and in this rule he is to see as set before him, on one hand, "*life and good,*" if he observe it ; and on the other, "*death and evil,*" if he be unfaithful to it.

It is of course to be understood, that in your public ministry you cannot regulate your life in every particular and detail by a system of rules, as in a community or a seminary. But making all due allowance for a position so wanting in uniformity, and even for occasional deviations from whatever order of observances you may

subject yourself to, there are, nevertheless, certain vital and essential points, which, under the most unfavourable circumstances, you can cling to, and the more unfavourable the circumstances are in which you are placed, the more necessary you will find it to adhere to these points.

Your greatest difficulty will be in the commencement. But if you adhere strenuously to your rule for two or three years, until you will have established for yourself a manner of life in conformity with its prescriptions, you will find little difficulty, with God's grace, in persevering in its observance afterwards.

I shall proceed to indicate the various points in order, making a few observations on each in going along.

THE EXAMPLE OF OTHERS NOT TO BE ADOPTED FOR A RULE OF LIFE.

By nature we are imitative beings, governing ourselves according to the example of others, and more inclined on account of the corrupt bent of our dispositions to follow bad than good example. Our Blessed Lord has, therefore, pronounced His woes upon the world on account of scandals, that is bad example, at the same time that He said "*it must needs be that scandals come.*"

This is the most dangerous rock before you in life, a rock that proves fatal to so many, as they enter on their ministry, who, otherwise, would maintain themselves in their first fervour ; and it is all the more dangerous as being backed so often by ridicule and banter and human respect.

You must be "*a wall of brass*" against this danger from the outset. I recollect a zealous and fervent Priest, who, after he had been some time in the ministry, came to make a Retreat, together with the students in the College where he had been educated. During the Retreat he sought an interview with the Priest conducting the exercises, and after excusing himself said his object was to ask him to recommend the young men he was addressing, above all things, to take with them on leaving college the virtue of *obstinacy*. "Oh," said the other, "you mean constancy or firmness of purpose." "No," was the reply, "I mean what I say, *obstinacy*, in the strictest sense of the term. You may inculcate the highest virtues, you may call up in these young men the most excellent dispositions, you may impress upon them the necessity of perseverance, and tell them they will have great need of firmness of purpose, and a strong will to persevere; but, let me speak from experience, and use the right word, and say that if they be not *obstinate* in the strictest sense, they will not resist for half a year the difficulties they have before them arising from the example of others, and the jeering and bantering with which they will be assailed. But, if they be *obstinate* and unbending in their *obstinacy* for a year or so, they will be left to themselves to carry out their good resolutions, and persevere in the observance of them."

Remember you will have to stand or fall by yourself, and it will be no excuse before the Supreme Judge, that you acted as others, that you followed others in the course they pursued. No, you take with you your

principles of guidance in order “*to walk worthy of the vocation in which you have been called*” (*Ephes.* iv. 1), and by these principles you are to be manifested before the terrible tribunal for an eternity of weal or woe.

By all means look around you in all directions, and you will see here and there examples to imitate, examples of holy Priests, true “*ministers of Christ, and dispensers of the mysteries of God*” (*1 Cor.* iv. 1), who, by the regularity of their lives, and their zeal in the service of the ministry, may say with St. Paul, “*be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ*” (*1 Cor.* iv. 16). Try to engage the charitable regards of one or two of these men, consult them in all your doubts and difficulties, and take their example for your rule of conduct. Recollect there is a wide difference between theory and practice, between principles and the application of them, and that, however learned you may be in book-knowledge, you will stand in need of the advice of those, who have acquired experience by having their hands actually engaged in the work of their ministry for years. Take one of these men for confessor, and let him be to you as a guardian angel to conduct you in all your ways until you will in time have acquired experience yourself. Even then cease not to seek advice, for at no part of our lives are we sufficient for our own direction. It is said of the great Bossuet that, whilst consulted by every one in grave and difficult matters, he sought advice himself in matters often of less importance, and when asked why he did so, he replied, that with regard to the concerns of others he was Bishop of Meaux, when consulted about them, but that he was as any other man in

need of advice in his own personal affairs. In consequence of our self-love we have different weights and measures for ourselves and others, and at every period of life the advice of Tobias to his son has its application : “*Seek counsel always of a wise man*” (*Tobias* iv. 19).

RETIRING AND RISING.

To observe order, in the course of your every-day duties, you must begin from a fixed point—that is, you are to have a fixed time for rising ; and as nature must have its due allowance of sleep, a certain time for rising supposes also a certain time for going to bed. Therefore, fix your time for both, which you may, however, allow to vary for different seasons of the year, but which, even treating yourself indulgently, you should not extend beyond seven hours, keeping in view the well-known Aphorism of the Salernian School of Medicine,

“*Sex horas dormire sat est juvenique senique
Vix septem pigro, nulli concedimus octo.*”

If you allow yourself the larger limit, you will provide thereby for a later hour sometimes in going to bed, or for want of sleep, which may happen occasionally during the night, so as not to change, if possible, your appointed hour of rising, on account of either contingency. All experience proves a longer time in bed more injurious than serviceable to health.

In order to secure punctuality in this most important observance, I would recommend you to provide yourself with “an alarm clock” as an essential article of your outfit, and the instant you hear its sound in the morning you will obey it as the voice of God, promptly and

cheerfully replying to it, with the youthful Samuel in the temple, “*Ecce ego quia vocasti me*” (*1 Reg.* iii. 6). Any delay should only increase the difficulty, and the sloth, to which you would give way in this first act, would be sure to hang about you in all your duties the whole day afterwards; whereas, if you get out of bed at once, in God’s name, you will find it easy from this first impulse, to take “a great and willing mind” to all you will have to do in God’s service during the day.

The entire day belongs to God. “*Tuus est dies, et tua est nox,*” says the Psalmist (*lxxiii. 16*); but the first act belongs to Him by a special right, as being the first fruits of the new day. Therefore, the Holy Ghost affirms in the Book of Ecclesiasticus, “*Justus cor suum tradet ad vigilandum diluculo ad Dominum*” (*xxxix. 6*). And again in the Book of Wisdom, “*oportet praevenire solem ad benedictionem tuam, et ad ortum lucis te adorare*” (*xvi. 28*). Therefore, St. Ambrose would say, “*An nescis homo, quod primitias tui cordis, ac vocis quotidiè Deo debes? Quotidiana tibi messis, quotidianus fructus.*” And St. John Climacus, adopting the same view, says, “*Da Domino primitias diei tuæ, erit enim tota ejus, qui prior eam occupaverit.*” In saying “*qui eam prior occupaverit,*” the saint would insinuate that there is a competition between two claimants for the first fruits of our day. But not satisfied with a mere hint on the matter, he goes on to say, “*est e spiritibus unus, qui dicitur praecursor, qui primùm nos e somno surgentes excipit, primumque nostrum cogitatum inquinare nititur.*”

St. Vincent Ferrer, speaking on the same subject,

would have us start from our bed at the appointed moment, as if the bed were on fire under us. "Statim," says this great Saint, "excussâ omni pigritiâ a strato discedas, ac si ibi esset ignis accensus."

MORNING PRAYER.

This is a common and indispensable duty for all Christians. The Priest, however, is to include in it the practice of meditation at least for half an hour. This he did during his seminary career, not as a part of the discipline of the establishment, during his time there, but as an observance essential to the holy state to which he aspired, and therefore to be continued during life.

To His Priests especially does the Prince of Pastors address the exhortation, "*Estote perfecti, sicut et Pater vester caelestis perfectus est*" (*Matt. v. 48*). And how, pray, will you attain this perfection without meditation? "*Absque meditationis exercitio nullus, secluso miraculo Dei speciali, ad rectissimam religionis Christianae normam pertingit*," says the celebrated Gerson; and the solemn declaration of so grave an authority is only the echo of the unanimous teaching of all spiritual writers on the subject. St. Bernard makes it a life or death practice. "*Tam pio, tamque utili otio nullam in vitâ operam dare, nonne vitam perdere est?*"

But, all authority apart, it is only necessary to think for a moment upon the nature of your ministry, to be convinced of the absolute necessity of meditation. What is your ministry? "*Sacerdotium quidem in terrâ peragitur*," says St. Chrysostom, "*sed in rerum*

caelestium ordine referendum est." Your ministry is, therefore, from heaven heavenly. Does it not follow as a necessary consequence, that your mind and heart should be in heaven, according to the words of St. Paul, "*nostra autem conversatio in caelis est?*" (*Phil. iii. 20*), and how can this be without the constant practice of an exercise, which employs our mind in dwelling on heavenly subjects ?

Without the practice of meditation, pray what comfort or consolation can you have in your sacred functions ? What taste or relish can you expect to have for your duties, if you be not a man of meditation ? Without this holy exercise you become a man of routine, and you will do the work of your high and holy calling pretty much as a mechanic works at his trade. You will fail to have the faith, the practical faith, which penetrating beyond what is external in the mysteries you dispense would be to you what the Apostle terms the "*argumentum non apparentium*," realising the hidden and heavenly effects that lie beneath the surface.

Faith—that is, the truths of faith—is like the mustard seed of the Gospel, which requires to be bruised, and broken to give out its power and effects. In the same way the truths of faith require bruising and breaking. This must be the work of meditation. Without meditation they have little or no influence on us. We feel neither their heat nor their pungency. Their enlivening power is without effect on our ministry, and as a consequence we become insensible to the things of God, and thereby cease to be animated from within with the zeal and fervour of supernatural virtue. Alas !

when it has come to this, and to this it must come, with a Priest who does not practise meditation, the gate is thrown open to daily and wholesale sacrilege. “*Haec locutus sum vobis, ut cum venerit hora eorum (quod Deus avertat) reminiscamini quia ego dixi vobis*” (*Joan. xvi. 4*).

Should it not appear that, if the Almighty in His desire of our salvation, were to send us down from heaven “an invincible shield,” “scutum inexpugnabile,” “wherewith we would be able,” as St. Paul says, “to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one” (*Ephes. vi. 16*), the present should be a very welcome one, indeed, and deserving our deepest gratitude? Now this shield is given us effectively in the practice of meditation, inasmuch as sin is incompatible with this holy practice. This St. Liguori explicitly declares, saying, “cum reliquis pietatis operibus potest peccatum consistere, sed non possunt cohabitare oratio et peccatum. Anima aut relinquet orationem aut peccatum.” The Ark of the Covenant and Dagon could not co-exist in the same temple, neither can prayer and sin in the same soul. Why, therefore, should we not be unfailing in a practice so holy and salutary, affording us such perfect security “to resist in the evil day, and be in all things perfect” (*Ephes. vi. 13*).

Will it be pretended that the works of your ministry do not allow you time for this essential duty? Alas! how true are not the words of the “Imitation of Christ.” “Si te subtraxeris a superfluis locutionibus et otiosis circuitionibus, necnon a novitatibus et rumoribus audiendis, invenies tempus sufficiens et aptum pro bonis

meditationibus insistendis" (*L.* 1, c. xx.) Away, then, with all pretexts, and let it be an essential observance of your every-day life to consecrate one half hour at least to holy meditation.

HOLY MASS.

Beyond the obligations, which you owe to the faithful in the ordinary course of duty, you should celebrate the holy Mysteries as often as your devotion would dispose you to do so, and you should endeavour to urge and maintain a devotion to do so as often as you can. Bear in mind through life the words of the "Imitation of Christ," "Quando sacerdos celebrat, Deum honorat, angelos laetificat, Ecclesiam aedificat, vivos adjuvat, defunctis requiem praestat, et sese omnium bonorum participem efficit" (*L.* 4, c. v.) On the other hand, listen to the Venerable Bede, "Sacerdos non legitime impeditus celebrare omittens, quantum in eo est:—1. Privat Sanctam Trinitatem laude et gloriâ. 2. Angelos laetitiâ. 3. Peccatores veniâ. 4. Justos subsidio et gratiâ. 5. In purgatorio existentes refrigerio. 6. Ecclesiam spirituali Christi beneficio. 7. Et seipsum medicinâ et remedio."

O Priest of the living God, "*taken from among men, and ordained for men, in the things that appertain to God, that you may offer up gifts and sacrifices*" (*Heb.* v. 1), you believe in your ministry; you have taken out this commission in your ordination; see the effects and consequences one way and the other, as you will fulfil or neglect it. Alas! if you celebrate only when you cannot avoid it, it is greatly to be

feared, that you celebrate unworthily. The dispositions necessary for the worthy celebration of the Divine Mysteries, should ever keep alive in your soul the sentiments of the Psalmist, “*Quam dilecta tabernacula tua, Domine virtutum, concupiscit et deficit anima mea in atria Domini. Altaria tua, Domine virtutum, Rex meus et Deus meus*” (*Ps. lxxxiii.*)

Cardinal Bona in his golden little book, “*de Sacrificio Missæ*,” which should be in the hands of every Priest, discusses the question, why so many derive so little spiritual profit from the frequent celebration of the adorable Sacrifice of the Altar, and having attested this distressing fact in a variety of examples, he traces it to various sources, one of which is a want of due preparation. He laments, that several approach the holy Mystery carelessly, by routine, custom, from motives merely human, not considering what a responsibility it is to celebrate even once; and he relates of the Venerable John of Avila, that this great servant of God having heard of a young Priest, who died very soon after his ordination, inquired if he had celebrated; and having been told that he did once, he observed, “he will have much to account for before the great Judge.”

Every work of any serious account is generally performed as we prepare for it. With what purity of soul, therefore, with what love and devotion should we not prepare for a work, than which, as the Roman Ritual would say to us, “*nihil dignius, nihil sanctius, et admirabilius habet Ecclesia Dei.*” O listen to the burning words of the great St. Chrysostom: “*Quo non oportet esse puriorem tali fruentem Sacrificio? Quo*

solari radio non splendidiorem manum carnem hanc dividentem? Os, quod igne spirituali repletur, linguam, quæ tremendo nimis sanguine rubescit?" And the Council of Trent—how thrillingly solemn the words it addresses to us on this subject: "Quod si necessariò fatemur" says the holy Council, "nullum aliud opus adeo sanctum, et divinum a Christi fidelibus tractari posse, quàm hoc ipsum tremendum Mysterium, quo vivifica illa hostia, quâ Deo Patri reconciliati sumus, in Altari per sacerdotes quotidie immolatur, satis etiam apparent, omnem operam, et diligentiam in eo ponendam esse, ut quantâ maximâ fieri potest interiori cordis munditiâ et puritate, atque exteriori devotionis et pietatis specie peragatur" (*Sess. xxii. de celebr. missæ*). The terrible words of St. Paul should ever ring in our ears: "Quicunque manducaverit panem hunc vel biberit calicem Domini indignè, reus erit Corporis et Sanguinis Domini. Probet autem seipsum homo, et sic de pane illo edat, et de calice bibat. Qui enim manducat et bibit, indignè, judicium sibi manducat et bibit, non dijudicans Corpus Domini" (*1 Cor. xi. 27, 28, 29*). Oh! if a malediction from heaven be pronounced, as it is pronounced upon him "*that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully*" (*Jer. xlvi. 10*), and, if we be warned, as we are warned, "*to prepare our mind before prayer, and not to be, as a man that tempteth God*" (*Eccli. xviii. 23*), what should not be our preparation for a function not granted to angels or archangels to perform, as St. Chrysostom so emphatically affirms!

Another cause why the adorable Mystery of the Blessed Eucharist, although in itself the very fountain

of grace, produces so little fruit in many, who frequently celebrate, is to be sought for in the manner in which they celebrate. In this we have three things especially to attend to. The first is the full and distinct enunciation of the words composing the sacred liturgy, so as to articulate every syllable.

Benedict XIV. complains bitterly of the want of this condition. "Illud certissimum est," says the great Pope, "non deesse, qui Sacrum negligentissimè faciunt, verba cum festinatione proferentes . . . Sacerdotibus ejusmodi illud aptissimè convenire potest, quod olim Tertullianus postulavit—sacrificat, an insultat?" (*de Sacrif. Missæ*).

In the second place, we are required to be most exact in the ceremonies, observing to a tittle the Rubrics of the Missal of St. Pius V. In his Bull in the beginning of the Missal, the holy Pope is most emphatic on this point. His words are: "Mandantes, et districtè præcipientes in virtute sanctæ obedientiæ, ut Missam juxta ritum, modum et normam, quæ per Missale hoc a nobis nunc traditur, decantet, et legat."

And Benedict XIV. lays it down as a matter beyond all controversy, that the Rubrics of the Mass are preceptive laws binding under pain even of mortal sin.

The third thing we are to observe in the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice is the gravity of manner we should maintain throughout. It is in this manner the Rubric would lead us to the Altar, "oculis demissis, incessu gravi, erecto corpore." Alas, hurry! how account for it? It can make a difference in time only of five or six

minutes more or less, and is it for this little more or less of time a Priest is to run ahead, as if it were a life-and-death effort to get away from the Altar ? How dis honouring to God ! What a scandal to the faithful ! Benedict XIV. deplores this irreverence in scathing words. “ *Ad Altare*,” says the illustrious Pontiff, “ tam exiguo tempore, adeoque tam incompositè detinentur, ut nullam omnino religionem, nullam verbis et precibus, quæ ad sacrificium pertinent, attentionem habere, procul dubio videantur” (*de Sacrif. Missae*).

However, in avoiding being rapid, one must not be too slow. The “ *Imitation of Christ* ” gives us a rule to follow. It says, “ Non sis in celebrando nimis prolixus aut festinus, sed serva bonum communem modum cum quibus vivis ” (*Lib. iv. cap. 10*).

A further reason why so little profit is derived from frequent Communion the Venerable John of Avila finds in the short time many allow themselves for thanksgiving after having received the adorable Sacrament. St. Teresa, so enlightened in the ways of God, entirely agrees with him, and, indeed, it requires but little reflection to arrive at the same conclusion. For, if a person of distinction came to visit us, and to bestow favours upon us, what an indignity, what an outrage would it not be to turn our backs upon him almost as soon as he would have entered our abode ? Where is our faith ? What moments can be more precious ? What business can excuse us from giving at least a quarter of an hour to our Divine Lord now actually, now really, truly, and substantially present within our breast ? “ I know,” says St. Augustine, “ that

ingratitude is very displeasing to Thee, O Lord. It is the root of all that is evil in the spiritual life, a parching wind burning up all that is good, and obstructing the source of the Divine mercy towards man" (*Solil.* xviii.) Hence the "Imitation of Christ" insists on our maintaining the devotion after Communion, with which we prepared ourselves for it beforehand, and says, "Ex eo quippe valdè indispositus quis redditur, si statim fuerit nimis effusus ad exteriora solatia . . . mane in secreto, ipsum enim habes, quem totus mundus tibi auferre non potest" (*Lib.* iv. *cap.* xii.)

There is a pleasant anecdote related of St. Philip Neri on this subject. It is known that St. Philip was fond of a practical joke, whenever the opportunity occurred, but, of course, always with a view to some good purpose. The anecdote goes on to say, that a certain Priest was in the habit of coming to his Church every morning to celebrate, but he left very soon after having put off the vestments. The Saint having been told of it said at once, "I'll see to that," and accordingly he ordered two acolytes to be in attendance next morning at the Church door with lighted torches, to accompany the Priest, on leaving the Church, through the streets, as if going with the blessed Sacrament to some sick person, according to the custom in Rome. The acolytes were at their post according to orders next morning, and, as the Priest was leaving, they took their places, one at each side, and marched along with him, bearing aloft their lighted torches. He looked with surprise to the right and to the left, and said, "What is the meaning of this?" They replied they were obeying Father Philip's orders.

He understood the matter on the spot, and begged the torch-bearers to go away. However, whilst the remedy was complete, the affair got wind, and all Rome was set laughing, every one asking his neighbour if he had heard of good Father Philip's last funny feat. It lives as an amusing anecdote in the conversations of the Romans to the present day, and, as occasion may be, the pleasant lesson of the dear Roman Saint is rehearsed for application as remedy or antidote, as the case may seem to require.

GUARDIANSHIP OF THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

“*Ecce positus est hic in ruinam et resurrectionem multorum in Israel*” (*Luc. ii. 34*). So spoke the Venerable Simeon, and his words point out to you, Priest of the living God, the tremendous alternative, in which your ministry places you. As our Divine Lord gave Himself up an Infant to Mary and Joseph to be taken care of by them, so does He give Himself up to you to be taken care of by you in the most Holy Sacrament of His love, the Divine Eucharist, and this guardianship will earn for you either a glorious resurrection or eternal ruin. Behold the guardianship committed to you. You acquit yourself of this privileged guardianship by the care and attention you pay to the Tabernacle, the sacred vessels, including of course your pixis with its appurtenances, vestments, sacred linens, &c. Alas ! our dear Lord has but too often reason to complain : “*Si Pater ego sum, ubi est honor meus ? Et si Dominus ego sum, ubi est timor meus ?*” (*Malach. i. 6*).

If you be obliged to have the adorable Sacrament in

your own house, see how you treat your Divine Guest. Alas! when parochial residences or presbyteries are being planned, everything is considered, except some suitable apartment, where to keep the most Holy Sacrament. And it could be so easily provided for by a projection in one of the exterior walls for a little chancel, which could be screened off interiorly by folding doors, to be opened for Mass or family prayers for the domestics ; or, if not originally designed, some other contrivance could be made. When the pious hostess of the prophet Eliseus noticed him frequently passing the way, and turning into her house to eat bread, she said to her husband, as we read in the 4th Book of Kings, 4 ch. : *"This is a holy man of God, who often passeth by us. Let us, therefore, make him a little chamber, and put a bed in it for him, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick, that when he cometh to us, he may abide there."*

"What things soever were written, were written for our learning," says St. Paul. Learn, therefore, a lesson from this pious example. Your Guest is more than a prophet. It is He, whom many prophets desired to see, and have not seen, whose day Abraham rejoiced for, and was glad in foreseeing at the distance of thousands of years yet to come.

It may be that you are not master of the house in which you reside, and that you can call only your bedroom your own, for the time being. Even so, have your little tabernacle, keep it in some article of furniture by itself, apart from everything else, and then let your affection make up for all that is wanting otherwise, like

Mary and Joseph in the Stable of Bethlehem. As you say your prayers, make your meditation, read your spiritual lecture, turn towards Him, whom the Angels adore, and, by your posture, as well as by the piety of your soul, show Him all the respect you can. As you believe in Him, hope in Him, and love Him, you will make it an unfailing observance in your daily devotions to make Him a formal visit, and pour out your heart's affections before Him. Remember the alternative : “*Positus est hic in ruinam et resurrectionem multorum in Israel,*” and remember that the day you will become undutiful to your Lord and Master in your care of Him in the Sacrament of His love will be for you a day of woe and malediction. “*Ecce praedixi robis*” (*Matt. xxviii. 7*). But that evil day does not come at once. It comes by slow, and imperceptible approaches, unless you be on your guard, and arrest the slackening of your fervour by reminding yourself constantly of whom you have charge, and that you have to meet Him one day as the great Judge of the living and the dead. Oh ! the terrible words, “*Pavete ad Sanctuarium meum, Ego Dominus*” (*Levit. xxvi.*) Yes, you have in your keeping the God of Majesty, in whose presence “*the pillars of heaven tremble and dread at His beck*” (*Job, xxvi. 11*), your ALPHA and your OMEGA, your FIRST and your LAST, your BEGINNING and your END, “*to whom be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*” (*Rom. xvi. 27*).

In your devotions to your ever dear Lord in the Sacrament of His love, one object should be especially precious to you. It is to make reparation to His

Adorable Heart for the irreverences, sacrileges, and ill-treatment of every sort, that He receives from mankind, who, according to the complaint of the Psalmist, “*repay Him evil for good*” (xxxiv. 12), in this Mystery of His love, goodness, and mercy towards us. O, who should be affected more than the Priest of God’s Altar for such base ingratitude? And who more than he should be zealous in making reparation to the Sacred Heart of his dearest Lord in the Adorable Sacrament, this being the end for which He Himself called into existence a special institute in His Church under the title of “the Sodality of the Sacred Heart of Jesus?”

SPIRITUAL LECTURE.

“*Attend unto reading,*” said St. Paul to his beloved Timothy, “*meditate upon these things, be wholly in these things, for in doing this thou shalt save thyself and them that hear thee*” (1 Tim. iv.).

St. Athanasius affirms that “there is no one truly intent on God’s service, who is not also given to reading.” Universal experience attests this truth, and every one who has had anything to do for any length of time in the direction of souls, could not fail observing, how, of themselves, pious souls are devoted to the reading of books of piety. They find in them, in a certain proportion, what St. Paul says of the Sacred Scriptures: “*Omnis Scriptura, divinitus inspirata, utilis est ad docendum, ad arguendum, ad corripiendum, ad erudendum in justitia, ut perfectus sit homo Dei, ad omne opus bonum instructus*” (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). In reading good and pious books you enjoy the company of the

holy authors who composed them. You see their examples, you hear their exhortations withdrawing you from evil, and constantly urging you onward in the practice of virtue. As you desire these great advantages, make the reading of a pious book, for some time, say from a quarter to half an hour, every day, an invariable rule, which, taking from your seminary, you will persevere in during your life.

Although our own spiritual profit should be our immediate object in our spiritual reading, we may also take account of the good resulting to others from this salutary practice. Mere knowledge of what we say is not sufficient for effective instruction or preaching. Our knowledge should be thoroughly digested, and assimilated, so as to become identified with our own minds ; otherwise our words fall still-born from our lips, and produce little effect. So, likewise, to move those whom we address, we must have within ourselves a motive power in the sentiments, with which we are penetrated. Now all this comes with God's grace from Spiritual Reading. We see it constantly in the different manner of a preacher, who in his inmost soul feels convinced of the truth he desires to convey, and whose very heart is saturated with the sentiment he seeks to impart, and another, who speaks as if performing a duty of routine, from which he cannot exempt himself, and appears as if little concerned about producing effect on his hearers. What he says may be very good in itself, and even better than what is said by the other, but owing to his insipid and lifeless manner he makes no impression. The difference is to be found in the practice which the

one has, and the other has not, of Spiritual Reading. This is only natural, for do we not see in every department of life, that when men have deep convictions and earnest feelings on any subject by reading about it, and thinking on it, until it has complete possession of their whole mind, they display a corresponding energy and ardour in their efforts to communicate the results to others?

Therefore was it that St. Paul counselled his beloved disciple Timothy “*to attend unto reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine.*” “*For doing this,*” said he, “*thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee*” (*1 Tim. iv. 13, 16*).

As to the books you will read, besides the Sacred Scriptures, you will find the following very suitable and profitable: The Imitation of Christ, the Spiritual Combat, St. Chrysostom “*de Sacerdotio,*” St. Gregory’s “*Regula Pastoris,*” Cardinal Bona “*de Sacrificio Missæ,*” Memoriale vitae Sacerdotalis, Schneider’s “*Manuale Sacerdotum,*” also his “*Lectiones quotidianæ de vita, honestate, et officio sacerdotum et clericorum,*” and his “*Manuale clericorum,*” St. Liguori’s *Selva*, &c.

You will derive great advantage also from reading the Lives of the Saints, especially of St. Charles Borromeo, St. Francis de Sales, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Ignatius, St. Francis Xavier, St. John Francis Regis, St. Alphonsus Liguori, the works of Blosius, of Louis Granada, Scaramelli, &c. &c.

You should read every year the Rubrics of the Missal and of the Roman Ritual, as also the diocesan statutes, so as to be quite familiar with them.

STUDY.

“Labia sacerdotis custodient scientiam, et legem requirent ex ore ejus, quia Angelus Domini exercituum est” (*Mal. ii. 7*). Consider yourself in the midst of a population. What is your ideal? *“Homo Dei ad omne opus bonum instructus.”* This ideal you are bound before God and man to realise in yourself. *“Ad omne opus bonum instructus.”* A preacher, an instructor, a catechist, a confessor, and in this last capacity a father, a teacher, a physician, and a judge; moreover, a minister of Christ, and a dispenser of the mysteries of God, a soldier and defender of the Church militant, armed with *“the sound word, that cannot be blamed: that he, who is on the contrary part, may be afraid, having no evil to say of you”* (*Tit. ii. 8*).

You have read the usual seminary course of Theology, Canon Law, Sacred Scripture, Liturgy, &c. &c. But in all this you have only opened to yourself those vast fields of study which it must be the labour of your life to cultivate. A judge, a barrister, a physician, or any other professional man, should be unworthy of his position, did he not continue to apply himself to his professional studies. Wonder not, therefore, at the sentence pronounced upon you, if you neglect to cultivate the various sciences belonging to your holy calling, *“quia tu scientiam repulisti, et ego repellam te, ne sacerdotio fungaris mihi”* (*Osee iv. 6*). Therefore, as you enter on your ministry, provide yourself with a little library, comprising a selection of the most approved authors, for the various departments of ecclesiastical science, and never think you have spent a day as you

ought, unless you have devoted a considerable portion of it to study, so far as you have been free from the actual labours of your ministry.

Alas ! how many fritter away their time in vain and useless reading, and pretend, nevertheless, they have not time for the necessary study of their profession. Yet the sentence is recorded, “*caecus autem si caeco ducatum praestet, ambo in foveam cadunt*” (*Matt. xv. 14*). Try, then, by all means, to maintain a hunger and thirst for increased knowledge, especially in all that appertains to your sacred profession.

There are three admonitions I would desire to impress particularly upon you. The first is, that you would always have in hand, so to say, some treatise on Moral Theology, not, indeed, to read it in all its minute details, like a student preparing for class, but to refresh your memory, and enlarge your knowledge with regard to matters of practical importance. With this view you could look over the index, to take up these matters in order, and especially such of them as you may be less acquainted with.

The second advice I would give you, is to justify your practice in every department of your sacred ministry by principle, so that when you find reason for doubting, you will consult your books, and make yourself quite sure of what you ought to do.

In the third place, I would advise you, that, when you hear any subject discussed, or spoken of, that you are ignorant of, or know only imperfectly, you would treasure it in your mind, and make out time, as soon as you can, to inform yourself fully and accurately upon it.

If you attend to these three admonitions, you will always have an appetite for study; and although your time may be very busily engaged with the labours of your ministry, you will not fail to turn to account broken intervals, as they occur; and the thoughtful habit of mind you will in this way maintain, will be sure to preserve the knowledge you acquire, and urge you on to add continually to your stock, so that, as St. Paul exhorted his beloved disciple Timothy, "*thy profiting may be manifest to all, and thus thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee*" (1 Tim. iv. 15, 16).

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE.

"*Si nosmetipsos dijudicaremus, non utique judicaremur*" (1 Cor. xi. 31). Here is the option, which God gives you, either to be your own judge, or to abide His terrible judgment. You make yourself your own judge by bringing yourself to an account at the bar of your own conscience, every night, for how you have spent the day. If you perform this exercise regularly and strictly every day, you will become more and more confirmed in your good purposes every day; whereas you will have infallibly to date your relaxations and falling away from the day you become irregular and remiss respecting it.

A bad habit, or a state of sin, is incompatible with a daily examination of conscience. Let it, therefore, be an essential part of your night prayers to examine your conscience, and by frequent acts of contrition, and firm purposes of amendment, you will settle your account, every day, with the great Judge, who threatens, otherwise, to cast you into prison, "*whence thou*

shalt not go out, till thou hast paid the last farthing” (Matt. v. 26).

And you will not be wanting to the good custom so general in Christian families of assembling your domestics for night prayers, and of making them, likewise, examine their consciences, remembering our dear Lord’s assurance, that “*where two or three are gathered together in His name, there He is in the midst of them*” (Matt. xviii. 20).

SOLID DEVOTIONS.

The fire is soon extinguished unless fresh fuel be laid on it. The fire of devotion requires, likewise, to be constantly renewed and excited. Therefore, the “Imitation of Christ” exhorts you in the following words: “Oportet te devotionis gratiam instantè quærere, indesinentè petere, patientè et fiducialitè expectare, gratantè recipere, humilitè conservare, studiosè cum eâ operari” (*Lib. iv. c. 15*). For this purpose have constant practices of solid devotion comprising the following :

DEVOTION TO OUR DIVINE LORD IN THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

This has already been recommended, and in your daily visits to your “*hidden God*,” pay your earnest homages to His most Sacred Heart, in order to make Him reparation for the ingratitude and ill-treatment, &c., received from mankind in this wonderful pledge of His love.

DEVOTION TO THE PASSION OF CHRIST.

You recite in the most solemn moment of the Holy Sacrifice, “*haec quotiescumque feceritis, in mei memoriam*

facietis." The Victim of Calvary and the Victim of the Altar are the same. How can you worthily minister at the latter, unless you cultivate the most lively devotion to the former? O, if we could say with St. Paul, "*With Christ I am nailed to the Cross,*" and, "*I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me*" (*Gal. ii. 19, 20*).

You are the minister to apply the virtue of the Cross to the souls of men, and thus co-operate in the mystery of Calvary. How can you do so worthily, unless that mystery engage your most tender devotion?

Have it, therefore, as a rule to perform some acts of piety every day in honour of your crucified Lord. Have your Crucifix before your eyes in your apartment, wear the Scapular of the Passion, and extend the devotion amongst the faithful. Inculcate devotion to the Way of the Cross, and give the example.

DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED MOTHER OF GOD.

"*Ecce, enim, ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes*" (*Luc. i. 48*). You are to have your share in carrying out this glorious prophecy. And, how can you do so, unless your own heart glow with piety towards her, who pronounces it? O, that we could realise in ourselves the sentiments of St. Bernard: "*Totis medullis cordium, totis præcordiorum affectibus, et votis omnibus Mariam veneremur, quia haec est voluntas ejus, qui totum nos habere voluit per Mariam.*"

Wear her livery by having yourself invested with her Scapulars. Carry her beads and recite them, as a daily homage. Celebrate her festivals with great piety, and by word and example extend her devotion.

DEVOTION TO ST. JOSEPH.

Surely we should prize the protection and patronage of him, whom the Almighty made choice of, for the guardianship of His Divine Son, and of His Blessed Mother. Recite some prayer in his honour every day. You can make it part of your night or morning prayers, or of both. Invoke him as the patron of a happy death.

DEVOTION TO YOUR ANGEL GUARDIAN.

“Nonne omnes sunt administratorii spiritus in ministerium missi, propter eos, qui haereditatem capient salutis” (*Heb. i. 14.*)

How ungrateful to forget him, who never for a moment forgets us, nor loses sight of the commission with which he is charged in our regard! With St. Bernard, therefore, have reverence for the presence of your Angel Guardian, confidence in his guardianship, and devotion for his love.

Recite some prayer every day in his honour, and give yourself the habit of invoking his protection going out and coming in, saying, for example, “Angele bone Dei, sit tibi cura mei,” or “Angele Dei, qui custos es mei, me tibi commissum pietate supernâ, hâc die illumina, custodi, rege et gubernâ.”

DEVOTION TO YOUR PATRON SAINT.

Think of the solemn covenant existing between you and your Patron Saint. It was instituted in the face of the Church, and in the sight of heaven, when in baptism you became a Christian. He feels a special interest in your eternal welfare. On your side bear not his name

in vain. Avail yourself of his influence before the throne of God, by having constant recourse to his intercession.

MONTHLY RETREAT.

“Statutum est hominibus semel mori” (Heb. ix. 27).

All must die—you are included in the decree; consequently the day is to come, and the hour and moment, when you are to pass away out of this temporary state of existence. When will that day, that hour, that moment arrive? You know not. It may be somewhat distant, and it may be at your very door. To him, that thought he had many years yet to live, and said to himself, “*take thy rest, eat, drink, and make good cheer,*” God made answer, “*fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee*” (Luke xii. 20), and when the summons comes shall you be prepared for it? Alas! “*man knoweth not if he be worthy of love or hatred*” (Eccles. ix. 1).

And you are to die but once. What then? Is it not said, and is it not a Divine Oracle, that, “*if the tree fall to the south or to the north, there shall it be?*” (Eccles. xi. 3).

What greater blessing can we aspire to than a happy death? and what greater calamity have we to dread than a bad death? Our dear Lord’s words will stand for ever, as a tittle of them shall never pass away. And He warns us beforehand to be on the watch, saying, “*Blessed is that servant, whom when his Lord comes, He shall find so doing,*” whereas, the servant, whom his Lord shall find unprepared, “*shall have his portion with*

the hypocrites, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (*Matt. xxiv. 46, 51*). Shall we not, therefore, take our dear Lord's gracious advice, "*Watch ye, therefore, for you know not the day nor the hour*" (*Matt. xxv. 13*).

For this purpose it will not surely be too much to set aside a day every month. Say not you cannot spare it. The "*Imitation of Christ*" would answer, and tell you : "*Si te subtraxeris a superfluis locutionibus, et otiosis circuitionibus, necnon a novitatibus et rumoribus audiendis, invenies tempus sufficiens et aptum ad bonis meditationibus insistendum*" (*Lib i. cap. xx*).

A fatal delusion it would be to postpone the great work for your last illness, when your illness in itself will scarcely allow you to occupy yourself about it. How thrilling the warning of the "*Imitation*" : "*Multa bona potes operari, dum sanus es, sed infirmatus, nescio quid poteris!*" (*Lib. i. cap. xxiii.*) If you ever had a serious illness, you had, I am sure, experimental proof of the little, the very little, one can do for eternity in such a state of suffering. Oh, no, our maxim through life should be, "*dum tempus habes, congrega tibi divitias immortales*" (*Ibid.*) You preach to others the certainty of death, its uncertainty as to when, and under what circumstances it is to occur, and, that occurring, it is to occur but once ; and from these truths you derive the instruction that we should make our whole life a preparation for death. Alas ! if the reproach should come home to yourself, "*Qui ergo alium doces, te ipsum non doces*" (*Rom. ii. 21*).

Therefore put every other business aside, and make

the day you reserve for a special preparation for death, the most precious day of the whole month.

Begin the day by a meditation on death—say Mass for the grace of a happy death—receive your Divine Lord as if you were receiving Him for your Viaticum—read during the day the 23rd Chapter of the first Book of the “Imitation of Christ”—think how you stand before God in every particular and detail, recollecting that if you are promised a reward even for the cup of cold water, you are told you must account for every idle word—take your measures for the month to come, as if it were to be the last—commit yourself to God’s holy keeping with hope in His mercy and goodness, but with fear and trembling as regards yourself—recommend yourself to the Mother of mercy and her chaste Spouse, Joseph, the patron of a happy death—invoke your Guardian Angel, and Patron Saint, thus acting as the “Imitation” would recommend you, saying, “*Fac nunc tibi amicos, venerando Dei Sanctos, et eorum aetus imitando, ut cum defeceris, illi te recipient in aeterna tabernacula.*” (*Ibid.*)

FREQUENT CONFESSiON.

It is chiefly by this means you are to preserve “*the salt*” from losing its savour. With singular unanimity the masters of the spiritual life insist upon once a week, at least, for a Priest to approach the holy tribunal of penance. It is upon this unanimity that the rule of St. Charles Borromeo is grounded. “*Singulis saltem hebdomadis, atque adeo saepius, et omnino semper, cum peccati mortalis consciī estis, confiteamini*” (*Conc. iv. Mediol.*)

But if, owing to particular reasons, you cannot, at any time, comply with this rule, you will overcome every difficulty to prevent the time extending beyond a fortnight, even though there should be no question of mortal sin. Alas ! to celebrate Mass in a state of mortal sin, or even in a doubtful state of conscience, or to remain for days in the guardianship of the most Holy Sacrament, and administer it, and other Sacraments in that unhappy state !! Alas ! what a triumph for the devil ! What a spectacle for the angels of heaven to exclaim on beholding it : *Obstupescite caeli super hoc, et portae ejus desolamini rehementer*" (*Jer. ii. 12*). O ! may God preserve you from such a calamity. Frequent confession is the means to avert it.

But take care lest the enemy succeed in poisoning this salutary fountain of life. It will be so, if you confess by way of routine, without earnestness, or correction of your faults, and especially without a resolution and strenuous effort to correct that special fault, even though it be only a venial sin, which is the source of your other sins.

You will also bear in mind the importance of choosing a confessor entitled to all your confidence, who will be to you another angel guardian, *to direct you in all your ways, and keep you from dashing your foot against a stone*—against any of these stumbling-blocks, or rocks of scandal, to be met with, alas ! everywhere, in the bad examples of brethren in the ministry.

How many young priests are lost by confessors, who will not rebuke them, or advise them, who will not stimulate or sustain them, who will not touch their ulcers, because, perhaps, they are labouring under the same

malady themselves ! Listen to St. Basil on this subject.
“Summâ vigilantiâ, acerrimâque in omnes partes circumspectione, operam dato, ut aliquem virum tibi invenias, quem in omnibus, deinceps, dilectæ vitæ studiis certissimum ducem sequaris.”

If you cannot find within a convenient distance such a confessor, you should nevertheless seek him out at any distance, and whilst you avail yourself of whomsoever you find most deserving of your confidence from those at hand for your ordinary confessions, you will have recourse to the other from time to time, and more especially in all your doubts, difficulties, and embarrassments. Without such a guide it is next to impossible for you to tread the difficult and slippery paths you have to walk in, without stumbling and falling frequently, on your way through life.

And in your annual Retreat continue through life the habit of making a confession of the year since your last Retreat, in preparing for which you will review the observances set down here, and renew your resolutions to keep them with greater fidelity and zeal for the future, more especially such of them as you have failed most in observing.

CLERICAL MODESTY.

“*Modestia vestra nota sit omnibus hominibus,*” says St. Paul (*Phil. iv. 5*), and he subjoins the reason, “*Dominus prope est.*” This modesty regards your exterior life in every way that it comes under the notice of mankind, and which it requires you to regulate, so as to be a constant lesson of edification to every one. The words of the Council of Trent are to be your rule. They

are: “Sic decet omnino clericos in sortem Domini vocatos, vitam moresque suos omnes componere, ut habitu, gestu, incessu, sermone, aliisque omnibus rebus, nil nisi grave, modestum, ac religione plenum, prae se ferant; levia etiam delicta, quae in istis maxima essent, effugiant, ut eorum actiones cunctis afferant veneracionem”—Sess. 22. The holy Council omits nothing, saying “aliisque omnibus rebus,” and all are to be so regulated “ut cunctis afferant veneracionem.” How sad to throw down with one hand what you build up with another! And would not this be the effect of vanity in your dress, frivolity in your manner, levity in your jokes, bantering in your conversations, the rude laugh, the absurd pun, the buffoon jeer? “*O homo Dei, haec fuge*” (1 Tim. vi. 11).

Say not you mean nothing wrong. St. Bernard would tell you “Inter saeculares nugae nugae sunt, in ore Sacerdotum blasphemiae; consecrasti os tuum Evangelio; talibus jam aperire illicitum, assuescere sacrilegium est.” (*Lib. de consid.*)

Is it not certain that a Priest edifying in his entire exterior does more good than a Priest of superior learning, or a brilliant preacher? Is not his confessional more frequented? Is he not called to the death-bed in preference to them? Would not manners less edifying be remembered by the faithful, as they would see you at the altar, as they would hear you from the pulpit, as they would think of approaching you in the confessional? and would not your ministry in these holy places suffer in their estimation, as they would think of you elsewhere? “Sunt nonnulli, qui quod verbis prædicant

moribus propugnant," says St. Gregory. Do not despise conventional observances of polite society; on the contrary, study them in a Christian spirit. You will find nothing in them that you may not reduce to an exercise of humility or charity towards your neighbour.

And we may place under the head of clerical modesty that blending of earnestness and mildness, which regulates the zeal of a Priest in his dealings with the faithful individually, as well as in his public preaching. "*Seniorem ne increpareris,*" says St. Paul to Timothy, "*sed obsecra ut patrem, juvenes ut fratres, anus ut matres, juvenculas ut sorores, in omni castitate*" (1 Tim. v. 1, 2).

Be specially condescending, patient and kind to the poor, honouring in them our Divine Lord, "*qui propter nos egenus factus est, quum esset dives*" (2 Cor. viii. 9), and who desires to be recognised, as he desires to be represented, in the persons of the poor. "*Quamdiu fecistis uni ex his fratribus meis minimis, mihi fecistis* (Matt. xxv. 40).

VISITS.

You cannot avoid visiting, nor can you avoid being visited, and amongst others, or rather more than others, young females will seek your acquaintance and friendship. Even your penitents will contrive very soon to know you out of the confessional, and to testify their gratitude and esteem by little presents and kindnesses. In all this they have no other motive than esteem for you personally, and reverence for your sacred character and ministry. And you, on your side, in your first fervour

and inexperience, suspect no danger. Alas! you are in the midst of a temptation, which has proved fatal, and proves fatal, every day, to numbers of young Priests. This is precisely the temptation against which St. Augustine sounds the alarm in the memorable words : “*Expertus loquor, experto crede, vidi cedros Libani turpitè corruisse, de quorum sanctitate non magis, quam de virtute Hieronymi dubitassem.*”

And elsewhere the same holy father, addressing himself to God, says : “*Vidimus enim multos, Domine, et audivimus a patribus nostris, quod utique sine magno tremore non recolo, sine multo timore non confiteor, ascendisse primitùs quodammodo usque ad caelos, et inter sidera nidum suum collocasse, postmodum cecidisse usque ad abyssos, et animas eorum in malis obstupuisse. Vidimus stellas de caelo cecidisse ab impetu ferientis caudae draconis*” (*Soliloq. xxix. 2*).

But you would say they are pious and holy souls. Ah! young man, you know not what you say. St. Augustine would again admonish you “*Quò sanctiores, eò magis alliciunt . . . Multae amicitiae spiritu caeperunt, et carne desierunt. Non es Davide sanctior, nec Samsone fortior, nec Salomone sapientior.*” Remember you are never nearer a fall in this sort of temptation than when you deem yourself secure. Your only security is keeping away from the danger. Remember that in this matter more than in any other the maxims are beyond question, “*Qui amat periculum in illo peribit*” (*Eccli. iii. 27*), and “*Qui spernit modica, paulatim decidet*” (*Eccli. xix. 1*).

O, insensati Galatae”—(will I say, “*insensati sacer-*

dotes ?")—“*quis vos fascinavit, non obedire veritati . . Sic stulti estis, ut cum spiritu coeperitis, nunc carne consummemini*” (*Gal. iii. 1, 3*).

As long as human nature remains what it is, your maxim must be : “*contra libidinis impetum apprehende fugam, si vis obtinere victoriam*” (*St. Augustine*).

In this matter you owe it to your ministry, over and above your own personal security, to avoid not only exposing yourself to the danger, but even to suspicion. This is the rule of St. Jerome : “*cavete omnes suspiciones, et quidquid fingi potest, ne fingatur, ante devita.*”

How instructive is the example of our Divine Lord on this subject. He allowed Himself to be made the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people, bearing to be called a drunkard, a glutton, a seducer, a blasphemer, a madman, a demoniac. But never did His worst enemies in their greatest rage, I will not say, accuse Him of the slightest charge against holy chastity, but they did not venture even to breathe such a suspicion—a lesson to you, His minister, never to put it in the power of even the deadliest enemy of religion, and the celibacy of the clergy, to whisper the slightest surmise against your virtue. “*Quidquid fingi potest, ne fingatur, ante devita*” (*St. Hieron.*)

Let your conduct be : 1st, to be visited and to visit, as little as possible for visiting sake, especially as regards the persons just spoken of; 2ndly, to observe towards them a manner and style of conversation mingling gravity with mildness, so that they may not be discouraged from coming to you, when they have *bonâ fide*

cause, at the same time they are to understand they are not welcome, if they have no such cause; 3rdly, to confine the conversation to the subject of their visit, and, that being disposed of, to signify by your silence, or some more distinct intimation, if necessary, you wish the visit to be over; 4thly, to avoid being ever “*solus cum solâ, loco et tempore indebito,*” as also idle and protracted gossips, and lively and over sprightly manner; 5thly, to take special care to have the same manner towards all, knowing them, and not knowing them alike, and permitting them to know you, and not know you in the same manner. “*Non sis familiaris alicui.*”

I will add only one admonition, in the words of St. Jerome, respecting domestics, “*Periculosè tibi ministrat, cuius vultum frequentè attendis.*” On this subject, more than any other, we should feel the force of the admonitions: “*providemus enim bona non solum coram Deo, sed etiam coram hominibus*” (2 Cor. viii. 21).

Leaving home for an excursion to a distance, and to be away for some time, do not, I conjure you, attempt to conceal your character as a Priest, by putting on the dress of a layman. In this advice I could use the words of St. Augustine, “*expertus loquor, experto crede.*” The reasons against unpriesting yourself in this way are too many to be detailed here; but claiming credit for long and varied experience, I would say to you in the words of St. Paul to his beloved disciple Timothy, “*O homo Dei hoc fuge*” (1 Tim. vi. 11). *Laqueus diaboli hic latet.*

MORTIFICATION.

When we look into ourselves, we find we are strangely constituted. We experience a strife continually going on between contending and opposite forces in our own interior. This misery the Apostle speaks of where he says, “*Scimus, enim, quia lex spiritualis est; ego autem carnalis sum, venumdatus sub peccato. Quod enim operor non intelligo. Non enim quod volo bonum, hoc ago, sed quod odi malum, illud facio . . . Scio enim quia non habitat in me, hoc est in carne mea, bonum. Nam velle adjacet mihi; perficere autem bonum non invenio. . . Condelector enim legi Dei secundum interiorem hominem: video autem aliam legem in membris meis repugnantem legi mentis meae, et captivantem me in lege peccati, quae est in membris meis. Infelix ego homo! quis me liberabit de corpore mortis hujus? Gratia Dei per Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum. Igitur ego ipse mente servio legi Dei, carne autem legi peccati.*” (*Rom. vii.*)

What a mystery are we not, therefore, to ourselves, with this ceaseless war within us! Was it so from the beginning! This question takes us back to the happy state in which God placed man in creating him. Of this blissful state the Scripture speaks in telling us: *Hoc inveni, quod fecerit Deus hominem rectum* (*Eccl. vii. 30*); and again, “*Deus creavit de terra hominem . . . et secundum se vestivit illum virtute*” (*Eccl. xvii. 2*). And the Apostle, looking back to this primitive state of man, describes it by saying, “*qui secundum Deum creatus est in justitiâ et sanctitate veritatis*” (*Ephes. iv. 24*). Commenting on this passage of the Apostle,

and quoting the words “*justitiâ et sanctitate*,” the great St. Augustine calls upon us to see what Adam lost, and what we lost in Adam; and St. John Damascene gives us in a few words, what is the teaching of all the Fathers upon the subject, saying: “*Creatus est innocens, rectus, probus, omni virtutum genere ornatus*” (*Lib. ii. de fide. c. 12*).

Man was not, therefore, in the beginning in this state of interior strife, in which we find ourselves so unhappily placed. The change comes from the fall of our first Parents. Man rebelled against God, and as a punishment the inferior part of our nature threw off its allegiance to the superior and broke out into rebellion against it. Let us try to understand this rebellion and the contending forces by which it is maintained on either side.

The human soul, in its essence, or substance, is one and indivisible. Nevertheless, it possesses various faculties, partly rational and partly animal. These animal faculties are common to us and the brute creation, whilst the faculties of reason, that is our memory, understanding, and free will, impart to us a superior dignity, a resemblance to our Almighty Creator according to His own ever blessed words, “*Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram*” (*Gen. i. 26*). Hence for convenience of expression, though, as has been observed, the soul is in itself essentially one and indivisible, we speak of it as having two parts, the rational or superior, and the animal or the inferior. This latter part is also called the sensitive appetite, and it is by it that the soul holds communication with the

body, and control over it for our bodily functions. As we analyse it, we find it to possess two distinct Powers, termed Concupiscent and Irascible, each having its respective passions, as they are called, which with one exception, are wonderfully placed in antagonism, two and two, with each other. They are eleven in number, six belonging to the concupiscent Power, and five to the Irascible.

The concupiscent Passions are :

Love, and its contrary, Hatred.

Desire; and its contrary, Aversion.

Joy, and its contrary, Sorrow.

They are called concupiscent, because desire or concupiscence has a prevailing influence amongst them.

The irascible Passions, so called as being principally governed by anger, are :

Courage, and its contrary, Fear.

Hope, and its contrary, Despair.

Anger, having no contrary, Passion.

In the state of righteousness, in which our first parents were created, these several Passions, both concupiscent and irascible, were under the complete control of reason, as obedient handmaids serving under a mistress. Reason commanded, and they obeyed with entire submission. But reason revolting against God, they were allowed to revolt against its authority, and like the anarchy following revolution in the social or political order, they would admit of no principle of government or restraint even amongst themselves, and furthermore they are in immediate communication with the body, to act upon its senses, its organs, and its

members, making them, according to the words of the Apostle, “*as instruments of iniquity unto sin*” (*Rom. vi. 13*).

In this state of intestine strife and disorder, we are to ask, with St. Paul, “*quis liberabit nos de corpore mortis hujus?*” and we are to answer with him, “*gratia Dei per Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum*” (*Rom. vii. 25*). Yes, the grace of God must come to our aid, and this grace our ever blessed and bountiful Redeemer has merited for us, and merited so copiously, that “*where sin abounded grace did still more abound*” (*Rom. v. 20*).

But we are yet to ask how does the grace of God operate to produce this reinstating effect; and we are to answer by the virtue of mortification, by our “*always bearing about in our bodies the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies*” (*2 Cor. iv. 10*).

We therefore see the office and function, the end and purpose of Mortification. It is to make us masters of our passions, to subject them to the empire of reason, and to submit our reason to God. Happy deliverance, in view of which the pious author of the “*Imitation of Christ,*” proclaims: “*Qui seipsum sic subjectum tenet, ut sensualitas rationi, et ratio in cunctis obediat mihi, hic vere vitor est sui, et dominus mundi*” (*L. iii., c. liii. 2*).

Let us understand thoroughly that we are here in presence of a fundamental point of Christian morality. In effect we cannot pretend to be followers of Christ, that is, to merit the name of Christians, unless we imitate Him in the example He has given us of the virtue

of mortification. The condition is express, and His words are above all ambiguity ; and they are addressed to all mankind at large, for “ *dicebat autem ad omnes : si quis vult post me venire abneget semetipsum, et sequatur me ; qui enim voluerit animam suam salvam facere perdet illam : nam qui perdiderit animam suam propter me salvam faciet illam.* ” This self-abnegation or self-denial—what is it but mortification ? and to enforce it still more our blessed Lord and Master proceeds to say, “ *Quid enim proficit homo, si lucretur universum mundum se autem ipsum perdat, et detrimentum sui faciat* ” (*Luc. ix. 23, 24, 25*). St. Paul only repeats the lesson of his Divine Master in saying, “ *Ergo, fratres, debitores sumus non carni, ut secundum carnem vivamus. Si enim secundum carnem vixeritis, mori emini : si autem spiritu facta carnis mortificaveritis rivetis* ” (*Rom. viii. 12, 13*). What therefore are we to say ? “ *Quid ergo dicemus ?* ” (*Rom. vi. 1.*) We have only to answer that the law is laid down making the virtue and practice of mortification a life or death question, “ *Si enim secundum carnem vixeritis mori emini ; si autem spiritu facta carnis mortificaveritis rivetis.* ”

To realise, therefore, our spiritual state, we are to consider ourselves acted upon from within by two agencies—and agencies so distinct and irreconcilable, that St. Paul, the better to make us understand them, would have us regard them by a figure of speech as two men in the same person, where he exhorts us “ *to strip ourselves of the old man with his deeds, and put on the new, him, who is renewed unto knowledge according to the image of Him that created us* ” (*Col. iii. 9, 10*) ;

and he points out the deeds of the former, as “*anger, indignation, malice, blasphemy, filthy speech;*” and those of the latter, as *mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience, and, above all things, to have charity, which is the bond of perfection* (*Ibid.* 8, 12, 13, 14).

We therefore see that with these conflicting agencies within us, our Saviour’s words, “*a man’s enemies shall be those of his own household*” (*Matt. x, 36*), are more than realised : we are absolutely our own enemies, and our worst enemies.

We can therefore understand the “*Imitation of Christ*” telling us one time, “*plus enim homo nocet sibi, si Jesum non quaerit, quam totus mundus, et omnes sui adversarii*” (*Lib. ii. c. vii. 3*) ; at another, “*non est molestior aut pejor hostis animae tuae, quam corpus tuum non bene concordans spiritui*” (*Lib. iii. c. xiii., 1*) ; and again, “*scito quod amor tui ipsius magis tibi nocet quam aliqua res mundi*” (*Lib. iii. c. xxvii. 1*).

We are therefore to stand out from ourselves, and putting before us the corrupt portion of our being, our sensitive appetite with its passions, we are to say to ourselves, behold your enemy, your worst enemy, a deadly foe in league with your enemies from without, the devil and the world, who can do you little or no hurt, only through means of this your enemy within.

We sometimes hear of men, who allow themselves to be so overcome with rage and revenge towards their fellow-men, that they rush upon them even with the certainty that they themselves shall have to expiate their crime on the scaffold. They say, “ I don’t care, if only I can be revenged of him ; nay, with hell open to

receive me immediately after, I must execute my vengeance upon him." We are shocked at such instances of human depravity; but let us turn our eyes inward upon ourselves, and look at our domestic foe, our corrupt nature—what does it say? "Yes," it says, "I know in destroying you I will destroy myself; I know that in acting the traitor and betraying you into the hands of your external enemies, I betray myself as well; I know that in perpetrating your damnation, I must go along with you myself to hell for all eternity. I care not—my enmity must be gratified, and provided I bring upon you the vengeance of your Creator, I am prepared to share with you your dismal fate." Here is verily our position, and our position not for a day or a year, but for our whole life without truce or a moment's intermission; for the words of holy Job shall stand true for ever, "*the life of man upon earth is a warfare*" (vii. 1).

We are therefore to ask once again with St. Paul, "*unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death,*" and our answer must again be, "*the grace of God by Jesus Christ our Lord*" (Rom. vii. 24–25); but we must add with the same Apostle, "*His grace in me hath not been void*" (1 Cor. xv. 10). The work of liberation must be a joint struggle. Of ourselves we are unequal for the task, but "*we can do all things in Him who strengtheneth us*" (Phil. iv. 13); and "*who will not suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able, but will make also with temptation issue, that we may be able to bear it*" (1 Cor. x. 13).

In this life-and-death struggle what must be the issue? When you have to live with a sworn enemy,

whom you cannot appease, nor absolutely kill, you have no other alternative, unless you give yourself up to him, but to get him under you, and, when you have him down, not to allow him to rise. Co-operating, therefore, with the grace of God, you must put before you this achievement, as the indispensable condition of victory. Hence the "Imitation of Christ" tells us in absolute terms, "tantum proficies quantum tibi ipsi vim intuleris" (*L. i. c. xxv. 11*), and asks the question in another place, "Quis habet fortius certamen, quam qui nititur vincere se ipsum? Et hoc deberet esse negotium nostrum, vincere se ipsum, et quotidie se ipso fortiorum fieri, atque in rebus aliquid proficere" (*L. i. c. iii. 3*). It was in this spirit that the great St. Bernard stimulated himself for the combat, "Let God arise," he exclaimed, "and let this armed giant fall at His feet: yea, let him fall, and let this enemy of God be crushed to pieces, this self-lover, this friend of the world, this slave of the devil. What do you think? Show yourselves to be just and righteous judges, and cry out with me, he is worthy of death; let him be hanged, let him be crucified" (*Serm. 90, de div. nom. 3*). But we cannot go this far, and we are to understand the holy Doctor as pouring out his soul in an outburst of exuberant fervour. We must live with our enemy, and let him live, because he is part of ourselves, and we can only go as far as St. Paul has given us the example, chastise these bodies of ours, these bodies of death, and bring them under subjection, lest, perhaps, when we have preached to others, we ourselves should become castaways" (*1 Cor. ix. 27*).

Therefore, being under the absolute necessity of overcoming our corrupt nature, and holding it in constant subjection, we are bound to consider in what this victory and subjugation consists. Both the one and the other are the work of mortification, which places our whole being under the empire of our reason, and submits our reason to the law of God. We are, therefore, brought to ask ourselves how we are to practise this virtue, or rather in what does its practice consist? To give a full and adequate reply to this question would lead us beyond our limits, and put before us a regular treatise on mortification. We shall, therefore, confine ourselves to three principal heads, which, for memory's sake, let us call THE THREE T's—the tongue, temper, and table, which we will take account of separately, and in order.

THE FIRST T, OR THE TONGUE.

With respect to the tongue and the use we make of it, our Divine Lord is very emphatic, making our judgment for an eternity of weal or woe to depend upon it. “*Ex verbis enim tuis,*” says He, “*justificaberis, et ex verbis tuis condemnaberis*” (*Matt. xii. 37*).

The Apostle, St. James, lays down the same alternative, saying in one place, “*Si quis in verbo non offendit, hic perfectus est vir,*” after having already said elsewhere, “*Si quis autem putat se religiosum esse non refrenans linguam suam, sed seducens cor suum hujus vana est religio*” (*iii. 2, i. 26*); after which, having descanted in the severest terms on the evils of the tongue, he goes on to state that “*it is a fire—a world of iniquity—placed among our members, defiling the whole*

body, inflaming the wheel of our nativity, being set on fire by hell" (iii. 6).

It was in view of these oracles of Divine Wisdom that the pious author of the "Imitation of Christ" laid down the following maxims :—

Velle me pluries tacuisse, et inter homines non fuisse (*L. i. c. x. 1.*)

Malus usus, et negligentia profectus nostri multum facit ad incustodium oris nostri (*L. i. c. x. 2.*)

Nemo secure loquitur, nisi qui libenter tacet (*L. i. c. xx. 2.*)

Quoties inter homines fui, minor homo redii . . . Facilius est omnino tacere, quam verbo non excedere (*ibid. xx. 2.*)

Ecclesiasticus would make silence an essential condition of prudence, "*et est tacens, et ipse est prudens*" (*xix. 28.*)

The Book of Proverbs goes further and says, "*qui moderatur sermones suos, doctus et prudens est . . . Stultus quoque si tacuerit sapiens reputabitur, et si compressorit labia sua, intelligens* (*xvii. 27-28*) ; and in another place it says, "*in multiloquio non deerit peccatum, qui autem moderatur labia sua prudentissimus est*" (*x. 19.*)

With regard to young men, Ecclesiasticus would advise them, that they ought to leave the elder to speak, that if several be speaking together, so that there be no hearing, they are not to pour out their words, and not to be lifted up out of season with their wisdom—that when asked twice, their answer should even then be short, that in many things it would be better for them

to appear as if ignorant, and to hear in silence, and withal inquiring, and when older men are present not to speak much (xxxii.)

These maxims regard mankind in general, but with what increased force do they apply to him, who has consecrated his mouth to the service of God, and the edification of the faithful. Hence the “Imitation of Christ” inculcates as follows: “*De ore sacerdotis nullum verbum, nisi sanctum, nisi honestum, et utile procedere debet, cum tam saepe Christi accipit Sacramentum*” (*L. iv. c. xi. 6.*)

And the great St. Chrysostom—O, how thrilling are his words, “*Quo solari radio non splendidiorem oportet esse manum carnem hanc dividentem, os quod igne spirituali repletur, lingua quae tremendo nimis Sanguine rubescit*” (*Hom. vi. ad pop.*)

But it is time to consider the particular faults and failings you are to guard against in disciplining your tongue and regulating your conversation.

First. Avoid, as St. Paul would have you to do, “*all foolish talking, or scurrility, which is to no purpose*” (*Ephes. v. 4*), and much more, all kind of language, of which he would say in the same place, “*nec nominetur in vobis, sicut decebat sanctos.*”

Secondly. Restrain your tongue from all raillery, bantering, sarcasm, and pungent joking in any way hurtful to the feelings of others. Remember the rule of charity, and say nothing to any one or of any one, which you would not like to be said to yourself, or of yourself.

Thirdly. Have an absolute abhorrence of the low

joke, the vile pun, and buffoonery in every form. Remember the words of St. Bernard, “Consecrasti os tuum Evangelio ; talibus jam aperire illicitum est—assuescere sacrilegium est.” (*Lib. de consid.*)

“*O, homo Dei haec fuge*” (*1 Tim. vi. 11*).

Fourthly. Contentiousness look upon as not only opposed to the Sacerdotal, but even the Christian character. St. Paul directs particular attention to this pest: “*Si quis*,” says the holy Apostle, “*videtur contentiousus esse, nos talem consuetudinem non habemus, neque Ecclesia Dei*” (*1 Cor. xi. 16*). Some characters have the unfortunate propensity of letting nothing pass in conversation without taking exception to it; and this is so easy to do, since scarcely anything can be advanced, that may not under a certain aspect be viewed differently.

Let your maxim be that of the Apostle, “*unusquisque in suo sensu abundet*” (*Rom. xiv. 5*). Thus will you “*avoid foolish and unlearned questions, knowing that they beget strifes. For the servant of the Lord must not wrangle, but be mild towards all men, apt to teach, patient*” (*2 Tim. ii. 23-24*).

And what would be the use of these contentions? Not indeed to gain over the other party to your view, for the maxim will be ever true,

“ He that’s convinced against his will,
Is of the same opinion still.”

For the same reason, do not interrupt others, and still more, avoid contradicting them. In decent society either would be a serious impropriety, but in a religious point of view, charity would run the risk of being sorely

wounded. Despise not the conventionalities of good society ; on the contrary, impart to them a religious motive and spirit, and you will render them in your own case practices of Christian virtue, especially of self-denial, humility, and charity.

Fifthly. It should not appear necessary to caution you against detraction—a vice so obviously at variance with God's law. But what Bossuet once said to Louis XIV. respecting another matter, we have unfortunately to say of this vice, “there are great examples for it, but greater reasons against it.” Let the golden rule of charity govern your tongue in all you say of your neighbour, so as never to say anything of him, that you would object to have said of yourself. O, that it could be said of you, “no one ever heard a bad word from your mouth respecting another.” What a panegyric, and yet it is no more than we are bound to by the Divine law.

Sixthly. And as you are not to speak ill of others you must not speak well of yourself, vainly looking for the esteem of your fellow beings. “*Non, enim, qui seipsum commendat, ille probatus est, sed quem Deus commendat,*” says the Apostle (*2 Cor. x. 18*). This habit of egotism and self-laudation miserably increases with age, until it becomes a drivelling infirmity in advanced life. How sad to see ecclesiastics, venerable by their years, and otherwise respectable, made a butt of ridicule to others, allowing themselves to be brought out upon the same oft-told stories of past years, and affording pleasure by the romantic air with which they endeavour to set off their anecdotes respecting what they said and did on such and such occasions, which they treasure

with childish vanity as memorable incidents of their bygone days. Do you anticipate this misery of age, by scrupulously avoiding saying anything in your own praise, or what would aim at the esteem of others.

Seventhly. But then, if you forbid yourself so many things in conversation, you may ask, what will you speak of at all? You have enough to speak of still. Look at two or three lawyers, or physicians, or merchants, or farmers, in conversation—what are they talking about? In 99 cases out of 100 they are engaged in the business of their profession, or state of life. Their minds are full of it, and “*out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*” (*Matt. xii. 34*). And does not your profession, “*O homo Dei*,” afford you abundant matter to speak of in whatever company you are? There is such a variety of ways for turning every occasion to account, that if you have the spirit of your state you cannot fail to be “*an example to the faithful in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity*,” as St. Paul exhorted his beloved disciple Timothy (*1 Tim. iv. 12*). “*He that holdeth the plough*,” says Solomon, “*and that glorieth in the goad, that driveth the oxen therewith and is occupied in their labours, and his whole talk is about the offspring of his bulls*” (*Eccles. xxxviii. 26*). His “whole talk” is about the business of his calling. What a reproach, therefore, would it not be before God and man, if you should forget yourself, and your sacred profession, in your conversation and intercourse with mankind, and especially with your brother Priests!

Should you be a bore by conversation suitable to your sacred character, retire within yourself, and let “*your*

conversation be in heaven,” as the Apostle recommends, “from whence also we look for the Saviour our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowness, made like to the body of His glory, according to the operation, whereby also He is able to subdue all things unto Himself” (Phil. iii. 21).

Let us take leave of this branch of our subject by repeating our dear Lord’s words : “*Ex verbis enim tuis justificaberis, et ex verbis tuis condemnaberis,*” and let us govern our tongues with the momentous alternative of eternal weal or woe before us, as the destiny awaiting us when we shall stand before His dreadful tribunal.

OUR SECOND T FOR MORTIFICATION IS OUR TEMPER.

O, that you had a temper proof against all provocation ! O, that you had the meekness of a Moses, of whom the Sacred Text records that “*he was a man exceeding meek, above all men, that dwelt upon earth*” (Num. xii. 3) ; or that of David, whose meekness all generations plead in appealing to the Divine goodness and mercy in the well-known words, “*Memento, Domine David, et omnis mansuetudinis ejus*” (Ps. cxxxii. 1).

But why speak of Moses, and why speak of David, or great servants of God, who were great chiefly by their meekness ? Let us rather approach our great Master, to whose image we must make ourselves conformable, in order to share in His glory—let us approach this Divine Teacher, because He would have us learn the virtue of meekness, not from His saints either of the Old or New Law, but from Himself. O, let us listen to His ever gracious words : “*Learn of Me, because I am meek and*

humble of heart" (*Matt. xi. 29*). O, here is the antidote against a bad temper, or the cure of it, if unfortunately we have contracted the habit of a vice so ruinous to our sacred ministry. O ! the ill-tempered confessor—what a havoc of souls does he not perpetrate in the very tribunal of reconciliation, by shutting the mouths of his penitents, as they are endeavouring to unburden their poor souls ! What little consolation does he bring to the bed of death ! What wounds does he not inflict on members of his flock, as he addresses them from the pulpit, and as he goes amongst them ! And the worst is, that he will not admit he has a bad temper. He will tell you it is zeal for the honour of God and the salvation of souls, and he will quote in his own defence "*Genimina viperarum*," "*Scribae et Pharisei Hypocritae, &c.*," and will appeal to our Blessed Saviour's example in casting the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and overthrowing the tables of the money-changers, and the chairs of those that sold doves (*Matt. xxi.*) ; and thus defending himself, he will tell you, in a tone defying contradiction, that he will, according to the command of God to the Prophet, "*Cry, and cease not to lift up his voice like a trumpet, and show his people their wicked deeds*" (*Isa. lviii. 1*) ; and that he will not cease "*to rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith*," according to the advice of St. Paul to Titus (i. 13)—Thus is it that the ill-tempered Priest excuses and justifies himself, making "*excuses in his sins*, according to the words of the Psalmist (*Ps. cxl. 4*). He deludes himself making the exception the rule, and, at the same time, allowing himself to forget, that there is

no one that can raise his voice with greater effect, or resist evil with greater power, than a man habitually meek and mild among the people he has to govern ; whilst on the contrary, a man in the habit of breaking out into storms of temper loses all control over his people, and forfeits their esteem and respect. No, as you desire to be a man "*powerful in work and word*" amongst the people of God, you must be a man of meekness, earning for yourself the Divine benediction, "*beati mites, quoniam ipsi possidebunt terram*" (*Matt. v. 4*). Yes, your meekness will make you master of the land, where you will be appointed to exercise your ministry and give you unlimited sway over the faithful, of whom you will have charge.

But how acquire this meekness ? You will have to mortify your temper. All men in a greater or less degree are naturally prone to anger. When you are struck on the arm, or any other part of the body, you cannot help feeling the blow ; but the blow is struck, and you have to bear it. In the same way your feelings are wounded by some annoyance you have received—you cannot help feeling it at the moment ; but you must put up with it. Your irritability may take the start of your sense of virtue—your eyes may flash for the moment and the muscles of your face may betray the disturbance within. Hold hard—do nothing—say nothing till you have subdued yourself, and restored the calm of your interior, and the victory will more than repay the effort. If, however, you have unfortunately given way, recover yourself with God's grace ; as soon as you can, retrieve the defeat, and be not punctilioius, saying it was the

other that was in fault, and that he should make the first advances. No, mortify your humour, and without considering who was right, or who was wrong, make amends to yourself for the break down of your temper. Remember always our Saviour's word, "*Blessed are ye, when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake, be glad and rejoice for your reward is very great in heaven*" (*Matt. v. 11*).

As to those with whom you live, or are associated in your ministry, your Parish Priest or fellow curates, where is the use of "kicking against the goad?" You must bear with them, as they will have to bear with you. Do so, "*in spiritu lenitatis*" (*Gal. vi. 1*). Remember there never were two together, who had not more or less to suffer from each other. In doing so patiently and mildly, "*they bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ*" (*Gal. vi. 2*).

For heaven's sake, "*Let all bitterness and anger and indignation be put away from you, with all malice; and be kind one to another, merciful, forgiving one another, even as God hath forgiven you in Christ*" (*Eph. iv. 31, 32*).

Be not prone to take offence, when anything amiss is said or done to you—you will save yourself a great deal of trouble—you will spare yourself a great deal of annoyance in passing through life, by letting things of this kind pass, as if you did not feel them. This, great people in the world call high-mindedness, or magnanimity, although there is often a considerable mixture of pride in it, and no small share perhaps of contempt for the offenders. You have better motives to rely on—

the motives of patience and charity, sustained by the grace of God accompanying the exercise of these great Christian virtues.

Try to be affable to every one, high and low, to the latter especially, as the friends of your Divine Master, and the favourites of heaven. O, yes, “*Congregationi pauperum affabilem te facito . . . declina pauperi sine tristitia aurem tuam, et redde debitum tuum, et responde illi pacifica in mansuetudine . . . et eris tū velut filius Altissimi obediens, et miserebitur tui magis quam mater*” (*Ecli. iv. 7, 8, 11*). Have a kind word, a kind look, and a kind manner, for every one. What you say “*in spiritu lenitatis*,” on the road side, as you meet “*a domestic of the faith*,” is taken home, and spreads edification through the family circle, so that it may be said of you, as of the Prophet Samuel, that “*not one of your words fell to the ground*” (*1 Kings iii. 19*).

You may perhaps have a difficult temper. Your merit will be all the greater in mortifying it, and overcoming it. The “*Imitation of Christ*” would say to you for your encouragement, “*Enimvero illi maxime prae aliis in virtutibus proficiunt, qui ea, quae sibi magis gravia et contraria sint, virilius vincere nituntur*” (*L. i. c. xxv. 3*). Therefore, “*Accinge te sicut vir*” (*ibid. c. xix. 4*). “*Nisi tibi vim feceris, vitium non superabis*” (*ibid. c. xxii. 5*). Certa viriliter: consuetudo consuetudine vincitur (*ibid. c. xxi. 2*). O, that you had so subdued your temper, as that it could in common parlance be said of you “*a child might come up and speak to you*.” You will arrive at this with God’s grace, if you follow the maxim, “*vigila super te ipsum*,

excita te ipsum, admone te ipsum, et quidquid de aliis sit, non negligas te ipsum" (*Ibid.* c. xxv. 11).

THE THIRD T, OR MORTIFICATION AT TABLE.

We are arrived at our third T, Mortification at Table. The devil has his snares laid everywhere, and they are to be found even amongst God's gifts, in the very food the Great Father of Mankind provides daily for His children on earth. Hence we have the thrilling words in the Psalms, "Fiat mensa eorum coram ipsis in laqueum . . . et in scandalum" (lxviii. 23).

Hospitality is a Christian virtue. It is still more a sacerdotal virtue, "*Hospitales invicem*" says the Apostle (*1 Pet.* iv. 9). But the virtue is so practised as to subvert itself. According to the prevailing custom you cannot entertain without considerable expense, and great trouble in furnishing your table—two consequences equally to be deplored result. In the first place, you furnish to your guests a temptation to excess in eating and drinking; and secondly, you give reason for a complaint, which St. Bernard so forcibly expressed in his own day in the following terms: "Clamat vero nudi, clamant famelici, conqueruntur et dicunt; nobis frigore et fame miserabilitè laborantibus quid conferunt ista? Nostrum est quod effunditis; nobis crudelitè subtrahitur, quod inaniter expenditis" (*De morib. et offic.* c. i., et 2).

But your great temptation is in the matter of drink. This is the great "*snare*" and "*stumbling-block*" you have before you, and which, alas! has brought many a Priest, who had entered upon his ministry with fervour

greater perhaps than you possess, to shame and disgrace. You have therefore a cardinal virtue here in question—Cardinal for every Christian, but especially so for the Ecclesiastic.

What a dreadful reproach does St. John Chrysostom pronounce upon this subject : “ Quantò melior asinus ebrioso est ? quantò canis præstantior est ? omnes certe animantes, quæ rationis expertes sunt, cum bibunt, et comedunt, ultra quam satis est, etiamsi mille homines cogérant, nunquam biberent ; pejores igitur irrationalibus estis, qui inebriamini ! ” What a disgrace !

But it is not a sin standing alone by itself ; it would plunge you into a deeper depth, “ *Luxuriosa res vinum* ” (*Prov. xx. 1*).

“ *Nolite inebriari vino, in quo est luxuria* ” (*Ephes. v. 18*).

“ *Nunquam ego ebrium castum putabo* ” (*S. Hieron.*)

“ *Ubi ebrietas, ibi certo certius luxuria est* ” (*St. Ambros*).

And, short of being a drunkard, are you not to dread these dreadful effects in a greater or less degree ? Why cast fuel on a raging fire ?

Besides, is there anything more certain from experience, than that the habitual taking of ardent drinks beyond the limit of the strictest temperance, brings on a variety of diseases in course of years. As, therefore, you desire to escape the dangers of intemperance, which alas ! will beset you, “ *a dextris et a sinistris*, ” from the moment you enter on your ministry, fix the quantity of wine or punch you will allow yourself. Let it be within the limits of the strictest sobriety, but let it be fixed so as never to exceed it.

You will have some importunity, perhaps some raillery, to bear up against for a time. It will, however, soon be over, and when your “quantum” is known, the observation you will have brought on yourself will be a greater help for the maintenance of your rule, than it was a difficulty at first. And what edification will you not give, when it will be noticed and spoken of, that you have fixed for yourself a rule, and that you keep it, in this matter.

In this temptation, perhaps more than any other, the maxim “principiis obsta” has its application. It begins generally by “sipping” out of meals, which creeps on by degrees. At first the quantity is small, the indulgence unfrequent, the reason or motive exceptional; but “crescit eundo” until the quantity becomes excessive, the indulgence daily, the reason or motive “quæcunque alia causa.” Then alas!

Sero medicina paratur :
Cum mala per longas invaluere moras.

AVARICE.

You will soon meet with the temptations of the soul-withering vice of avarice. In the beginning, and perhaps for a considerable time, you will have very little to spare. On this account you will be exposed to contract close and parsimonious habits. These habits will be liable to continue, when your means will become more plentiful. Then comes the passion so well described in the words “amor nummi crescit, quantum ipsa pecunia crescit.” Yes, and when the passion has set in, the cries of destitution, the wailings of the widow and the orphan

will resound in your ears, and resound in vain. Then, as regards your ministry, the curse will come upon you of "*supposing gain to be godliness,*" when you will experience, according to the words of the Apostle, "*that they who desire to become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition*" (1 Tim. vi. 5, 9). You will observe how the Apostle calls this vice "*a snare of the devil,*" to give us to understand, that we may be caught unawares. This we constantly see in life, and see, moreover, that even when caught, the avaricious man will not allow the thought come near his mind, that he is avaricious. In confession, or out of confession, he has no scruple about it. Nay, he may have several excellent qualities, that gain for him the esteem of many around him, which adds to the favourable opinion he has of himself. Let us listen to a council of the church bearing testimony to this deception : "How many Priests are there," says a council of the church of Milan, "otherwise good, modest, of upright life, given to study, exemplary, but this cursed penuriousness and avarice render them objects of hatred before God and man, and deprive their life and preaching of all regard and confidence ? "

Who has lived for any considerable time, and has not seen examples of such men ? The individual who traces these lines has several cases in his recollection, but will be content with mentioning two, with which he was more particularly acquainted.

One was a man who, by bland and courteous manners, insinuated himself into the good graces of several fami-

lies, so that he used to take them in a circuit, and dine with one or other of them every day. His living by this means cost him little, and being in all other regards most tenacious, his money in the course of years accumulated to several thousands. His years came on him, and foreseeing that in the end he should not be able to go to the bank, he sold out his stock, and locked up the proceeds in a strong box in his bedroom. No person knew anything, beyond suspicion, about "the hidden treasure," for it is a property of the avaricious man to keep his secret as closely as he keeps his money. However, his last illness came at length ; and what about the strong box and its contents ? The fear of his keys came into his mind, and the poor miserable man crept out of bed, put on his small-clothes, and, transferring his treasure from the box to his pockets, got back again to bed. There he lay with the "sacra fames auri" preying upon his very vitals, with his thousands upon his person, and would have so died, were it not that a venerable Priest, coming to see him on the very day he died, and finding out by some means the state of the case, induced him to make his will. A few hours saw him in eternity ! Few, indeed, would say, "May my last end be like to his."

The other case was one of an old Parish Priest, who was indeed much respected and esteemed by his parishioners for his several amiable and excellent qualities and affable manners, but who spent his long life in hoarding up his pounds, shillings, and pence, as they came into his grasp. He realised some four or five thousand pounds in a mere country parish. But the end came, and as the poor man lay on his bed of

death, fully aware that he was dying, he called his curate to his bedside, and with the utmost calm of manner—for he was a man of quite a stoic temperament—spoke to him to the following effect : “ What I am thinking of is, when I shall be laid out after death, I would like to have a decent vestment upon me. May I ask you to see to that, and put the new vestment, that was lately got for such a chapel upon my remains ? ” “ But,” said the curate, “ you know that vestment was got by a collection made in the parish, and it is therefore the property of the parish.” “ I know that,” replied the dying man, “ but surely my good parishioners will not grudge it to me after my forty years amongst them.” He died—his will was opened, and it was found, that the whole of the four or five thousand pounds was bequeathed to a nephew, who had no connection whatever with the parish ! What became of the money ? The nephew was apprenticed to an attorney at the time, but threw up the profession, thinking better of speculating on his legacy. He embarked in a certain enterprise, which completely broke down, leaving him without a penny, so that he not only lost the hoard of forty years’ gathering, but his professional prospects along with it. In his chagrin he became a drunkard ; and so ended the miserable drama of uncle and nephew, adding another to the many sad examples that have given occasion to the proverb, that “ there is no luck in Priest’s money.”

We are now prepared to hear the scathing language in which the Holy Ghost denounces the vice of Avarice. In Ecclesiasticus He says, in emphatic terms “ *Avaro nihil est scelestius* ” (x. 9). And St. Paul—does he

not make it the root of all evils? “*Radix omnium malorum cupiditas*” (*1 Tim. vi. 10*). And does he not also classify it with the vices that exclude from the kingdom of heaven, placing those who are infected with it side by side with the “*molles,*” the “*mascularum concubitores, fures, ebriosi, maledici, rapaces?*” Oh! Priest of the living God, how art thou fallen from thy sublime dignity to place thyself in company with such odious sinners, and to have the same sentence registered against thee and them, “*regnum Dei non possidebunt !!*” (*1 Cor. vi. 10*).

Fatal delusion! After these fearful denunciations of the Divine Word, we cannot be surprised at the exceptional vehemence with which the holy Fathers condemn the vice of avarice.

St. Chrysostom holds it up to detestation by calling it the “worst of all passions”—“*passio omnium pessima.*”

St. Jerome stigmatizes it as the very ignominy of the Priesthood, “*Ignominia Sacerdotum est propriis studere divitiis.*”

St. Bernard pronounces what is superfluous in the hands of a Priest as robbery and sacrilege—“*Conceditur tibi,*” says this holy Father, “*ut de altari vivas . . . quidquid præter necessarium victum, ac simplicem vestitum, de altari retines, tuum non est, rapina est, sacrilegium est.*”

And a Synod of Salsburg, held in 1509, speaking of this vice in Priests, deplores it, saying, “*Nihil detestabilius in clero quam avaritia, quae causa est omnium malorum.*”

What infatuation is it not, therefore, for a Priest to

surrender himself to a passion so loudly condemned by God and the saints of God's Church at all times ?

But excuses are pleaded, and the moneyed Priest will say, that he intends sooner or later to make good use of his money, but to do anything considerable it is necessary to have a considerable amount laid up. Fatal delusion ! Time wears on. The cries of misery, and the various demands of religion reach his ears, but reach them in vain. So centered are his affections in his wretched pelf, that he cannot bear the idea of making a will. At length the end is nigh. Death knocks at his door. "*O death,*" says the Holy Ghost, "*how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man who hath peace in his possessions*" (*Eccl. xli. 1*). A voice comes from the other world saying to him, "*Weep and howl . . . your riches are corrupted . . . your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be as a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh like fire. You have stored up to yourselves wrath against the last days*" (*St. James v. 1, 2, 3*).

Overcome by these frightful threatenings, he surrenders. A will is prepared, and after all his clinging and hugging he must part with his heart's treasure, realising the sentence of the Apostle, that "*having brought nothing into this world, we can carry nothing out*" (*1 Tim. vi. 7*). I say a will is prepared. Alas ! how often does it happen, that he is carried off by a sudden death without having made a will, and how often is he so straitened in the end, that the will is disputed, to the disgrace of the Church and the scandal of the faithful ?

A young man entering the ministry does not concern himself about the temptations of avarice. If the vice comes before his mind at all, he dismisses the thought as a mere abstraction. But temptations should be guarded against from afar, and there is no temptation that requires precaution at a greater distance, especially by a Priest. Therefore is it that the Church makes him proclaim on the threshold of the sanctuary, that he takes the Lord as his portion and inheritance—“*Dominus pars haereditatis meae et calicis mei, Tu es qui restitues haereditatem meam mihi,*” thus making him a follower from the outset of Him, “*who being rich became poor for our sakes*” (2 Cor. viii. 9). Oh, that we all had the spirit of St. Paul, to say with him, “*having food and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content*” (1 Tim. vi. 8). Therefore to be beforehand with the temptations of a vice so ruinous to a Priest, take the advice of Tobias, “*Give alms out of thy substance, and turn not away thy face from any poor person . . . according to thy ability be merciful. If thou have much, give abundantly; if thou have little, take care, even so, to bestow willingly a little*” (Tobias iv. 7, 8, 9).

In the beginning, and perhaps for some time, you can give but little. Nevertheless, take care to give that little. After a time, you can afford to give more abundantly; you will be prepared to do so. Thus will you do honour to your ministry, and entitle yourself to be ranked amongst the Priests, who, according to the Apostle, rule well, so as to be esteemed worthy of double honour—“*duplici honore digni habeantur*” (1 Tim. v. 17).

PREACHING.

If wanting to this duty, your condemnation is already pronounced. “*Vae mihi est, si non evangelizavero*” (*1 Cor. ix. 16*). St. Paul appeals to the supreme Judge, and would summon you before His dreadful tribunal in the words addressed to Timothy: “*Testificor coram Deo et Jesu Christo, qui judicaturus est vivos et mortuos per adventum ipsius et regnum ejus, praedica verbum insta opportunè, importunè, argue, obsecra, increpa, in omni patientia et doctrina*” (*2 Tim. iv. 1, 2*). This is more than a precept. It is “*a dispensation committed to you;*” it is “*a necessity,*” to which you have subjected yourself in becoming a Priest, “*Dispensatio mihi credita est . . . necessitas mihi incumbit*” (*1 Cor. ix.*).

The obligation begins the day you enter upon your public ministry. If you have any difficulty, by all means surmount it, and do so at once. You should only increase it by postponing. Preaching is more a matter of practice than of learning, or rather you learn by practice. Start from the post in God’s name, and God’s blessing will be with you in the effort for His glory, and the good of souls. Listen to St. Francis de Sales. “*Quantò citius rem auspicaveris, tantò illa feliciùs tibi proderit. Deus id vult, Angeli expectant, gloria Dei ea est, et tua salus . . . Dic primùm quatuor verba, tum octo, denique duodecim, usque ad horam medium; post haec cathedram conscende. Nihil impossibile amori. Dominus Petrum interrogat non ‘doctusne es, an eloquens’ ut ei dicat ‘pasce oves meas;’ sed ‘amas me?’ Divus Joannes morte appropinquante aliud nesciebat quam repetere, quartâ horae parte, ‘Filioli diligite alterutrum.’ Cum*

hâc provisione cathedram concendebat, et nos reformatum eam concendere nisi certa eloquentiae illuc afferamus . . . Amor tacere nescit, ubi amati interest ne taceatur" (*Lit ad. Archiepisc. Bituric.*).

HEARING CONFESSIONS.

As far as possible be unceasing in this soul-saving work. Everything else is only cultivating the Vineyard. Hearing confessions is collecting the fruit. It is here more than anywhere else you exercise "the most divine of all divine works"—"Co-operatio Deo in salutem animarum." Here it is that applying the blood of Calvary to the souls of sinners, you effectually blot out the "*chirographum decreti quod erat contrarium illis*" (*Col. ii. 14*).

Consider what you do in a single absolution of a sinner. Is not the conversion of a sinner a greater work than the creation of the world? So says St. Augustine! And this is the work you perform as often as by the grace of the Sacrament of Penance you reconcile a sinner with God.

"Denturi donec confessarii, ecce omnium Christianorum plena reformatio," exclaims St. Pius V. O, it is in this work that you should say to God every day of your life, "*Ego autem libertissimè impendam et superimpendar ipse pro animabus vestris*" (*2 Cor. xii. 15*).

Let the public know what are your hours to be in your confessional, and be ever ready, moreover, for a casual call that may be made upon you. The salvation of that soul may depend on your attending *at once* to the demand she makes on your ministry just now,

being urged by Divine grace, and perhaps after a severe conflict with the devil, and poor corrupt nature. O, how often have I met with men of stout hearts and powerful frame, trembling at every nerve and perspiring at every pore, after a struggle of this sort, as they presented themselves for confession ! What a cruelty to put such cases off for another time ? Tobias is praised by the Archangel Raphael for leaving his dinner to go bury the dead, and what should not you put off to rescue a poor soul from spiritual death ? Oh, aim at the reward of being welcomed into the kingdom of heaven by the numerous souls, whom you will have sent before you, opening to them by the constant use of the mysterious keys committed to you the gates of these blissful realms.

CARE OF THE SICK.

The decisive moment approaches. A soul is to be saved, or lost, for all eternity. This tremendous alternative is between you on one side, and the devil, let me say, on the other, at the sick bed. Are you at your post ? He is there : “*habens iram magnam, sciens quod modicum tempus habet*” (*Apoc. xii. 12*).

On your part, do you come, *habens zelum magnum, “sciens quod modicum tempus habes ?”*

And you must not be satisfied with one or two visits. Ask yourself, how often has the tempter been there since your last visit ? “O ! si per culpam tuam, una tantum anima gratiâ sanctificante in ultimo periculo privaretur, si per negligentiam tuam, absolutione, sacro viatico, ultimâ unctione careret, et, idcirco, criminibus co-operta coram Deo sisteretur, et judicata damnaretur, QUALE

CRIMEN COMMISSES : QUALIS ULTIO TE MANERET ? IN
SAECULA SAECULORUM MALEDICERET TIBI PERDITA ANIMA.”
(*Memorale Vitae Sacerdotalis*). Oh ! it is not a brother’s
blood, as in the case of Abel, that would cry out
from earth against you, but “*the precious Blood of
Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled*” (1 Pet.
i. 19), would ascend, and “*enter into the ears of the Lord
of Sabaoth*” against you. Remember, and tremble as
you remember, that “*with what measure you meet, it
shall be measured to you again*” (Matt. vii. 2). Alas !
if only one soul, “una tantum anima, per culpam tuam,
gratiâ sanctificante, in ultimo periculo, privaretur,” the
longest life would be too short to do penance for your
guilt, and you should wish for tears, not ordinary tears,
but tears of blood, to deplore such a calamity.

And you are to remember how often wounds are dis-
covered, at the hour of death, which lay concealed during
life ; listen to the “*Memorale Vitae Sacerdotalis*,”
already quoted, “O ! Quanta vulnera saepius invenies,
quales iniquitates, quas nisi prudenter extorseris, retin-
ebunt aegroti usque ad mortem, et quae cum illis in pul-
vere dormient ! O ! Quale servitium praestitisti, si abomi-
nabile hoc secretum fregisti ! Qualem consolationem
infirmo suppeditasti ! Quale obstaculum ad salutem
amovisti ! beatus es, o fili, si id feceris” (*Ibid.*)

Consult priests of experience and zeal ; they will
tell you there is nothing exaggerated in this thrilling
admonition.

Read also the instructions of the Roman Ritual
“On the visitation and care of the Sick,” and
during life feel penetrated with the conviction, that your

greatest responsibility, as also your greatest merit, are in this most precious ministry. And if, on the one side, we are to be terrified at the thought of a single soul being lost through our fault, let us, on the other, aspire to the happiness of being escorted, before the throne of God, by the numbers that we will have snatched out of the lion's mouth to claim for us the joyous blessing, "*Euge serve bone et fidelis, super multa te constituam, intra in gaudium Domini tui*" (*Matt. xxv. 23*).

SHORT ADDRESSES.

St. Paul says, "*Verbum Dei non est alligatum*" (*2 Tim. ii. 9*). Neither must it be bound up in your mouth. It must be always in readiness, as occasion will require it.

Especially in the administration of the Sacraments, and other functions, you are to have a word in readiness to address to the faithful for their instruction and edification. How wanting should you be to your duty in the Sacrament of Penance, if, after hearing the confession of your penitent, you would proceed at once to pronounce the words of absolution, without exhorting him to contrition? You should, therefore, have a few words on the various motives of contrition to address to your penitents, according to their different dispositions. Also, when you have a number of penitents waiting for you, how edifying and useful would it not be to say a few words to them before you begin to hear their confessions, instructing them about how they should examine their conscience, excite themselves to contrition, beg God's assistance, &c. In the same way, when you have a

number of Communicants approaching the Holy Table, how much will not their dispositions be improved by a short and fervent address on the dispositions for a worthy Communion ?

But in attending the sick, can anything be more heartless than merely to administer the Sacraments without saying anything to animate, excite, and comfort the poor sufferer ? Oppressed by sickness, and half-stupified by medicine, how can he, without your assistance, stir up within himself the dispositions required to receive the last helps and consolations of religion ?

Oh, how different is the feeling of the down-stricken patient, when attended by a fervent “*dispenser of the mysteries of God*” from that which he should have, if attended by one in whose mouth “*the word of God is bound up?*”

When leaving, you would do well to suggest to the friends in attendance about the sick bed, to assist the patient, from time to time, in saying his prayers ; and you could point out in the prayer-book the prayers you would recommend. You will also leave after you some pious ejaculations with some one in particular, to be suggested to the sick person, more especially the invocation of the sacred names of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

In like manner, in all other functions, have a few words to say explanatory of the function, and of the dispositions requisite on the occasion.

But, if these addresses are to be short, they should be all the more fervent on that account. It is your fervour that will render the word of God proceeding

from your lips, a “*living and efficacious word, and more piercing than any two-edged sword,*” according to the words of the Apostle (*Heb. iv. 12*). In your fervour, however, you are to avoid all reproachful words, as well as all exhibition of tone and manner, that would give offence or pain. Your principal aim should be to show forth the mercy, goodness, and love of God towards man in the institutions and means of grace, with which He has enriched religion, and to instruct the faithful how to avail themselves of them with advantage.

Finally, you will be careful to be distinct in what you say on these occasions. How sad to hear a Priest putting forth a jumble of inarticulate sounds without unction or heart! How can he expect to touch or excite those listening to him, if he himself be as one destitute of all religious sentiment in what he says? Let the Word of God, therefore, be really the Word of God in your mouth, and as it passes from your mouth to the ears of those you address. Thus “*you will both save yourself and them that hear you*” (*1 Tim. iv. 16*).

The holy Council of Trent is very express in what it says respecting these short addresses, on the occasion of administering the Sacraments. “*Ut fidelis populus,*” says the Council, “*ad suscipienda sacramenta majore cum reverentiâ atque devotione accedat, praecipit sancta Synodus episcopis omnibus, ut non solum cum haec per semetipsos erunt populo administranda, priùs illorum vim et usum, pro suscipientium captû, explicit, sed etiam idem a singulis parochis piè prudentèrque, etiam lingua vernacula, si opus sit, et commodè fieri poterit, servari studeant*” (*Sess. 24, de Reformatione c. 7*).

SYNOPSIS
OF A PRIEST'S LIFE IN THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF THE
CHURCH.

EVERY YEAR.

Annual Retreat.

To read the Rubrics of the Missal.

Do. do. of the Roman Ritual.

Do. Diocesan Statutes.

Do. His Will.

Easter Duty of the faithful.

First Communion of Children, and preparation for Confirmation.

EVERY MONTH.

To see if all the Altar linens be clean, and if everything appertaining to Divine Service be in a proper state, including his own Pixis.

To preside at, or attend, the monthly meetings of the various Institutes of Religion and Piety attached to his Church.

Monthly Retreat of a day.

EVERY WEEK.

The various services of the Church, including Mass, Vespers, Special Devotions, Confessions, &c. &c., all at their proper time, with exactness and punctuality.

Weekly Confession.

Some devotion to the Passion on Friday.

Visit of Parochial Schools.

EVERY DAY.

To rise at a fixed hour.

Morning Prayers, including Meditation for half an hour.

Small hours.

Mass.

Confessions.

Out-duty through the Parish.

Spiritual Lecture.

Study of Theology, and preparation for Sermon or Instruction on Sunday.

Matins before dinner.

Useful reading during the evening.

A Visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

Rosary of the Blessed Virgin.

Night Prayer, with Examination of Conscience, and Reading subject of Meditation for next morning.

N.B.—A Parish Priest should, moreover, inspect all parochial title deeds, insurances, state of the churches and schools, to see if they require repairing, alteration, or improvements. It would be well to have a fixed time in the year for doing so.

He should likewise take account of the working of the various institutes of religion and charity in the parish, and it would be desirable to have an annual Report from each, detailing the work done during the year, and all matters within the end and scope of the institute.

Quicunque hanc regulam secuti fuerint, pax super illos et misericordia (Gal. vi. 16).

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE IN A RETREAT.

The object of a Clerical Retreat, like every other Retreat, is an amendment and improvement of life. For the attainment of this object, a Retreat proposes, with God's grace, three means, answering to the three questions—*QUARE?* *QUID?* *QUOMODO?*

QUARE? or what are the reasons for undertaking an amendment and improvement of life? These are furnished in the subjects of meditation proposed during the Retreat.

QUID? or what is to be amended and improved? This is found out by the examination of conscience, which each one makes for himself, and before God, “*the Searcher of hearts.*”

QUOMODO? By what special means is this amendment and improvement to be carried into effect after the Retreat? This is to be done by the faithful and persevering observance of the resolutions one makes under the inspiration of God's grace during the exercises.

These means, all three, are essential to the object of a Retreat; but the most essential, unquestionably, is the examination of conscience. For to what purpose would we persuade ourselves that we ought to amend and improve our lives, or to what purpose would we make resolutions to this effect, if we did not discover, by examining our conscience before God, what we have to amend and correct? Therefore, a large portion of the Retreat should be employed in this most essential

work. It is with a view to assist in some degree in performing it, that the following form of Examination has been drawn up. But much remains to be done, which must depend on every one's own endeavours, aided, of course, by the light of Divine grace, which he should implore most earnestly of God by constant prayer during the exercises.

In disposing yourself for the examination of your conscience, you will place yourself in the presence of God, as your Supreme Judge, in the same manner as a criminal (to use the comparison of St. Ignatius in his Book of Exercises) is brought in fetters before the bar of justice, and you will humbly ask the grace necessary to know your sins, and detest them. Then passing in review the several points of this Examination, you will, in all sincerity, demand an account of your soul as to each particular.

When you will have placed all your misery before your eyes, you will accuse yourself with sorrow, in presence of God's immense goodness, promising, at the same time, an entire amendment, and invoking for that purpose the Divine assistance.

But, if you desire to use this Examination for meditation, and therefore to delay at greater length on the several points, you will consider :

1st. How serious are the faults indicated in each point, and how justly are they condemned.

2ndly. How hurtful they are, if they be not avoided.

3rdly. And what resolutions you are to adopt with a view to an entire amendment of life.

In this exercise you will apply yourself not so much to a dry investigation, as to the sentiments

and affections of soul suitable to the purpose in view. You will therefore deplore and lament your sins. You will excite yourself to fear and trembling on account of them, acknowledging yourself before heaven to be a most base sinner, unworthy of the bread you eat, of the air you breathe. You will, at the same time, excite yourself to hope, turning to your Divine Saviour crucified, seeking refuge in His adorable wounds, sprinkling yourself with His most sacred Blood, having recourse to the Mother of Mercy, and invoking the intercession of all the Saints of heaven. Say to them, "*Miseremini mei, miseremini mei, saltem vos amici mei. Recipite fugitivum vestrum sed fratruelem, sed consanguineum in Sanguine Redemptoris*" (*S. Bern. Med. c. 4*).

It may be expedient, before examining and confessing your sins in detail, to consider in general, and explain in confession, what are your ordinary habits and the tenor of your life, and if your previous confessions can be relied on as valid, in order that your confessor, obtaining by this means a fuller knowledge of the state of your soul, may the better help you.

HOW DO YOU ESTEEM YOUR VOCATION?

What idea have you of the Priesthood, which St. Ambrose designates "a God-like profession." "*Deifica professio*" (*de dignitate Sacerd. c. 2*), and admiring which, St. Augustine exclaims, "*O veneranda Sacerdotum dignitas, in quorum manibus, velut in utero Virginis, Filius Dei incarnatur?*" (*Conc. 2 in Ps. 37*).

Do you reflect on the duties and functions of a Priest, and the good or evil depending upon him ?

“Hoc enim omnibus fere saeculis compertum fuit, pro sacerdotum vitâ benedictionem, aut maledictionem a Deo in populum procedere” (*Synodus Osnabrugens, A.D. 1628*).

By what motives are you actuated in the performance of your duties and the general tenor of your life?

Are you animated with a zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls? or rather are you not swayed by ambition, a desire of temporal emolument, a more easy mode of life, or inordinate attachment to relatives?

What efforts do you make to root out vicious habits, and to acquire the requisite knowledge and virtue of your state?

Have you effaced the stains of your former life by condign penance?

Or were you one of those, whom St. Bernard speaks of, saying, “*Ingrediuntur cum hâc maculâ tabernaculum Dei viventis; inhabitant cum hâc maculâ templum, sanctum Domini polluentes*” (*de Convers. ad Clericos, c. 20*)?

As you have reason to hope, that you have been duly called to the Priesthood, do you attach due value to so holy a vocation?

Audite filii Levi, num parum vobis est, quod separavit vos Deus ab omni populo, et junxit sibi, ut serviretis ei in cultu Tabernaculi? (*Num. xvi. 8, 9*).

WHAT IS THE GENERAL TENOR OF YOUR LIFE?

Do you walk in a manner worthy of your holy vocation?

An exemplum fuisti fidelium in verbo, in conversatione, in charitate, in fide, in castitate? (*1. Tim. iv. 12*).

By what spirit are you animated ? Whether is it the spirit of Christ or the spirit of the world ?

Si quis autem Spiritum Christi non habet, hic non est ejus (Rom. viii. 9).

Quicumque voluerit amicus esse saeculi hujus, inimicus Dei constituitur (Jac. iv. 4).

Whose example do you follow ? Is it of those in the ministry, of whom St. Paul would say, “*Conversatio eorum in cælis est?*” or rather is it not of those who are walking in the broad way of perdition ?

Are you not spending your life in ease and idleness, or are you not striving to obtain human applause and the esteem of men ?

Seminasti multum, et intulisti parum et qui mercedes congregavit, misit sea in sacculum pertusum (Agg. i. 6).

Going on as you are, will you be able to say with St. Paul, “*Bonum certamen certavi, cursum consummavi . . . in reliquo reposita est mihi corona justitiae ?*” (2 Tim. iv. 7).

What penance have you done for past sin ? The Council of Trent would have your whole life a continual penance, “*perpetua poenitentia esse debet*” (Sess. xiv. de Ex. Unct.)

How have you made your confessions, and what fruit do you draw from them ?

Have you gathered from them the fruit of sanctification ; or rather (which God forbid), have you not been laying up for yourself a store of wrath by the manner in which you have been making them ?

Secundum duritiam tuam et impoenitens cor, thesauri-

zas tibi iram in die irae, et revelationis justi judicii Dei. (*Rom. ii. 5.*)

Have you stated everything candidly and openly in your confessions ?

Perhaps taking account of matters of lesser moment you have either altogether passed over, or you have only lightly touched on, depraved habits, involving sacrilege in your ministry and mortal negligences.

“ O Poenitentes, non poenitentes, sed illusores, ex-colantes culicem, camelum autem glutientes !” (*S. Aug.*)

Have you brought to your confessions sincere sorrow and a firm purpose of amendment, or rather have you not spent in idle conversation the time you should have given to preparation before and thanksgiving after your confessions ?

Recogitabo tibi omnes annos meos in amaritudine animae meae (*Isai. xxxviii., 15.*).

Reflect on your obligations towards God, towards your neighbour, and towards yourself. Especially consider your duties as a Pastor of souls. Look into all your works, words, thoughts, and omissions, and find out what you have been, what you are, and what you wish to be for the future ; and according to your guilt in God’s sight, let Him see your sorrow in the depths of your soul, and have recourse to His divine mercy by true repentance.

“ *Exitus aquarum deducant oculi mei. Operiat confusio faciem meam. Deficiat in dolore vita mea; et anni mei in gemitibus* ” (*Ps. cxviii. 136; Ps. xxx. 11.*).

A PRIEST IN REFERENCE TO GOD.

Examine with what fidelity you have acquitted yourself of all the duties which regard the service of God.

What has been your Faith, Hope, and Charity ?

In what manner have you performed your works of piety, the Sacrifice of the Mass, the recital of your Office, meditation, pious reading, &c. &c.

AS TO FAITH.

Have you believed, with the fullest adhesion of your mind, all the things the Church proposes to us to believe ?

Do you render to the Church that filial piety and reverence due to this best of mothers, promoting her honour, observing all her laws, and condemning all that she condemns ? “ Credamus, fratres, quantum quisque amat Ecclesiam Christi, tantum habet Spiritum Sanctum ” (*S. Aug. Tract. 32, in Joan.*)

Do you cherish in yourself, and do you endeavour to maintain in others, due obedience and reverence to the Supreme Pontiff, and the Holy See ? Do you not sometimes carp at things, which the Church and the oly See have approved of, such as pious Congregations, Sodalities, and such like, as also, certain devotions and blessings, the use of medals, beads, and other helps to devotion and piety, to which indulgences and favours of the Church have been attached ?

“ Si quid universa per orbem frequentat Ecclesia, quin ita faciendum sit, disputare, intolerabilis insaniae est ” (*S. Aug. Epis. 54*).

“Ecclesia Dei multa tolerat, et tamen quae sunt contra fidem et bonam vitam non approbat nec tacet, nec facit” (*Idem. Ep. 55, &c.*)

“Oportet nos, sicut membra inhaerere capiti nostro, Romano Pontifici, et throno Apostolico, ex quo nostrum est quaerere—quid sentiendum, et quid tenendum sit” (*S. Cyrillus Alex. in Thesauris, L. i. c. 21, n. 4*).

Do you maintain certain opinions, that are suspected, rash, and ill-sounding, savouring of the pernicious spirit and maxims of the world, rather than the spirit and mind of the Church?

“*O Timothee, depositum custodi, devitans profanas vocum noritates*” (*1 Tim. vi. 20*).

Doctrinis variis, et peregrinis, nolite abduci (*Heb. xiii. 9*).

Do you not indulge in dangerous reading, or otherwise expose your soul to be corrupted in a manner contrary to faith or morals?

Is your faith a lively one, so as to animate your life and regulate your conduct?

Quid proderit, fratres, si fidem quis dicat se habere; opera autem non habeat? Daemones credunt et contremiscunt (*Jac. ii. 14, 19*).

Is your life a life of Faith?

Justus meus ex fide vivit (*Heb. x. 38*).

Do you judge of things according to the light of Faith, or rather according to the maxims of the world?

What are your sentiments as to the contempt of the world, the flying from honours, poverty, persecutions, denying yourself, &c. &c.?

AS TO HOPE.

What is your hope?

Do you place all your trust in God, or rather is it not in men, in human wisdom, and fleeting goods?

Mihi autem adhaerere Deo bonum est, ponere in Deo spem meam (*Ps. lxxii. 28*).

Do you allow yourself to be dejected, and fall into despondency in presence of difficulties, forgetting God's goodness, mercy, and power, and that He will never allow those to be confounded, who put their trust in Him?

In te Domine speravi, non confundar in aeternum (*Ps. xxx. 2*).

Perhaps, on the contrary, you abuse the Divine Mercy by remaining in a state of sin or tepidity, putting off the amendment of your life from day to day.

Sperant ut peccent—dīnumerari non possunt quantos haec inanis spei umbra deceperit (*S. August.*)

AS TO CHARITY.

Do you love God with your whole heart?

Can you say with St. Peter, *Etiam Domine, tu scis quia amo te*" (*Joan. xxi. 16*).

Do you shun what you know to be displeasing to God, not only in great, but in lesser things?

Does this love of God animate your life, lifting up your affections and desires to God, so as to dispose and stimulate you to undertake, and do, all for His honour and glory?

PRAYER.

Are you a man of prayer ?

Quisquis non orat Deum, nec divino colloquio cupid assiduè frui; is mortuus est, et vitâ carens (S. Chrysos.)

Besides your morning and night prayer, do you, according to the example of all the saints, frequently turn to God during the day, particularly in all your difficulties, troubles, and temptations ?

Ubiunque fueris, intra temetipsum, ora, aut aliquid salutare in animo tuo versa (S. Bernd. Med. c. 6).

THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

With what purity of heart and conscience do you approach this Most Holy Sacrifice ?

Do you approach it always free not only from mortal guilt, but, as far as possible, from deliberate venial sin, and from all affection to every kind of sin ?

Quodsi necessario fatemur, nullum aliud opus adeo sanctum ac divinum a Christi fidelibus tractari posse, quàm hoc ipsum tremendum mysterium—satis etiam appareat, omnem operam et diligentiam in eo ponendam esse, ut quantâ maximâ fieri potest interiori cordis munditiâ, et puritate, atque exteriori devotionis et pietatis specie peragatur (Conc. Trident, Sess. xxii. de Sacr. Missæ).

Quo non oportet esse puriore tali fruentem sacrificio ? quo solari radio non splendidiorem manum, carnem hanc dividentem ? os, quod igne spirituali repletur ? linguam, quæ tremendo nimis sanguine rubescit (*S. Chrysostom, hom. 60*).

Do you ever put off going to confession when guilty of mortal sin ? And do you approach the Holy Sacrifice in this state, relying upon what appears to you sufficient contrition ?

Nullus sibi conscius mortalis peccati, *quantumvis* sibi contritus videatur, absque præmissa sacramentali confessione ad Sacram Eucharistiam accedat. Quod etiam ab iis sacerdotibus, quibus ex officio incubuerit celebrare, hæc sancta Synodus perpetuo servandum esse decrevit, modo non desit copia confessoris (*Conc. Trid. Sess. xiii. de Eucha. cap. 7*).

And if under the pressure of necessity you celebrate, after having been guilty, and without going to confession, do you go to confession as soon as you can afterwards, as strictly commanded by the Council of Trent ? (*Ibid.*)

What are your motives in coming to the Altar ? Are they pious, and supernatural, or is it according to a dry and insipid habit, or perhaps from a motive of lucre ?

Quamvis enim ex Apostoli sententia (*1 Cor. ix.*), natura et divina lex jubeat, ut qui altari servit, ex altari vivat, tamen quæstûs, et lucri causa ad altare accedere maximum sacrilegium est (*Catechs. Rom. P. ii., c. 7, Q. 4, 1*).

Do you prepare yourself fervently for the Holy Sacrifice, meditating for some time with all your soul upon the sublime mystery you are going to celebrate ?

Cum celebrandi tempus imminet, colligant se sacerdotes ab omni animi distractione, et gratiam tremendum illud mysterium dignè peragendi a Deo implorent, curentque, ut ex precibus canonicis saltem

Matutinum cum Laudibus absolverint, quemadmodūm etiam Rubricae Missalis Romani praescribunt (*Synod. Augustana, an. 1610*).

Cum sacerdos fuerit totus alteratus, et divinus effectus, ita ut nihil videat nisi Deum, tunc accedat (*S. Bonavent*).

Putting on the vestments, do you recite the prescribed prayers, and do you cause silence to be kept in the sacristy ?

Is your sacristy provided with all the prescribed requisites—such as a font for washing the hands before and after Mass, holy water stoup, crucifix, prie-dieu, charts, with prayers before and after Mass, &c.

Before proceeding to the Altar, do you make, with chalice in hand, a profound reverence to the crucifix ?

Do you approach the Altar, and retire from it, as the Rubrics prescribe, “ oculis demissis, incessu gravi, erecto corpore ? ”

With what piety and devotion do you celebrate ?

Nescis maledictum in Sacris litteris eum vocari, qui facit opus Dei negligenter ?

Nescis irreverentiam in S. Missa ab impietate vix se-junctam esse posse? (*Trident Sess. xxii. de celebr. Missae*).

Do you regulate every movement and action at the Altar, so as to promote as well the edification of the faithful as your own devotion ?

An vitas omne indecorum et absurdum capit, oris, et reliqui corporis motum? (*Synod Augustana, an. 1610*.)

Do you make the genuflexions and signs of the Cross in a proper manner, so as not to betray hurry or affectation ?

Do you pronounce all the words with the prescribed voices—some in the ordinary voice, some in a lower voice, and some in secret?

Do you wait for the clerk to finish before you resume, and do you make him do the same with respect to yourself?

Are you too rapid or too slow in celebrating?

Do you observe all the ceremonies, and with this view do you read the Rubrics from time to time, recollecting, on the authority of Benedict XIV. that the Rubrics of the Mass are preceptive laws of the Church—binding under pain of sin, even of mortal sin?

Do you take care that the wine you use be pure and genuine, and the bread duly fresh?

In collecting the particles on the corporal do you use all possible diligence, as one believing that our Blessed Saviour is really and truly present in each particle, however small?

After Mass do you spend a proper time in thanksgiving? And, during the day afterwards, do you endeavour to retain a grateful sense of the great grace and favour you received?

Esse sine Jesu gravis est infernus, esse cum Jesu dulcis Paradisus (Imit. L. ii. c. 8).

If a Parish Priest, are you exact in offering the Holy Sacrifice for your flock?

Do you discharge your intentions within proper time?

If there be foundations for Masses in connexion with your Church, are they complied with in strict accordance with the intentions of the founders?

THE OFFICES OF THE CHURCH.

Do you enter the Church with a modest and reverent exterior?

Are the offices and functions of the Church discharged at a fixed hour?

In the sacred functions of your Church, in the administration of the sacraments, in processions, obsequies for the dead, &c. &c., do you observe proper reverence, so as to edify the people who are present?

Pavete ad sanctuarium meum; ego sum Dominus (*Levit. xxvi. 2*).

In passing before the Blessed Sacrament, do you genuflect to the ground?

Do you see that all persons attending at the Altar, or taking part in the functions of the Church, be in proper costume, and conduct themselves with proper reverence?

Are you careful to maintain neatness and cleanliness in the Church, the furniture of the Church, Altar requisites, and vestments, so that you may be able to say, "*Domine, dilexi decorem domūs tuae?*" (*Ps. xxv. 8*).

RECITING OF THE BREVIARY.

Do you regard the reciting of your Breviary as the prayer of the Church, which you are bound to offer officially in her name for the entire Christian world?

Pro universo terrarum orbe legatus intercedit Sacerdos (*S. Chrysost. de Sacerd. c. 6*).

Do you take account of your Office as a duty, to which you are bound under pain of mortal sin?

Have you omitted any notable part of it without necessity?

Do you recite your Office in proper time and place?

Do you postpone Matins and Lauds sometimes, without sufficient cause, till after Mass?

Do you recite it “dignè, attentè, et devotè,” duly preparing yourself beforehand?

Ante orationem praepara animam tuam, ne sis quasi homo tentans Deum (Eccli. xviii. 23).

Do you endeavour to remove distractions, as they come upon you, during your Office?

Si quid aut negligentia aut aliâ culpâ commiseris paululum colligens te veniam a Deo pete (*S. Carolus Borom.*)

Si orat psalmus, orate, si gemit, gemite, si gratulatur, gaudete, si sperat, sperate, si timet, timete (*S. Aug. in Ps. xxx.*)

MEDITATION.

Do you give some time, every day, to meditation?

Or do you expect, what no Priest can hope for, to obtain the perfection of your state without meditation?

Absque meditationis exercitio nullus, secluso miraculo Dei speciali, ad rectissimam religionis Christianae normam pertinget (*Gerson*).

Nam haec est, quae mentem purificat, regit affectus, dirigit actus, corrigit excessus, componit mores, vitam honestat, et ordinat (*S. Bern. de consid. L. i. c. 7*).

Perhaps you excuse yourself through want of time? Attend to the Imitation of Christ.

Si te subtraxeris a superfluis locutionibus, et otiosis circuitionibus, necnon a novitatibus, et rumoribus audiendis, invenies tempus sufficiens, et aptum pro bonis meditationibus insistendis (*L. i. c. 20*).

EXAMEN OF CONSCIENCE.

Do you bring yourself every day to an account before God by examining your conscience?

Do you perform this exercise with sufficient care and attention?

In your Examen, have you in view the extirpation of some particular vice, or the acquisition of some special virtue?

Si omni anno unum vitium extirparemus, cito viri perfecti efficeremur (*Imit. L. i. c. 11*).

Are you regular in the observance of night prayer, and do you see that your domestics attend likewise to the same observance?

FREQUENT CONFESSON.

How often do you confess?

“Singulis autem hebdomadis, atque adeo saepius, et omnino semper, cum peccati mortalis consciī estis confiteamini” (*S. Carolus Borom. Conc. iv. Med.*)

In what manner do you make your confessions? Perhaps in a negligent, routine kind of way, without correction or amendment.

Si negligenter agimus, ipsa nobis medicamenta convertuntur in vulnera, et inde habemus judicium, unde poteramus habere remedium (*S. August.*)

If you have a mortal sin to confess, do you mention likewise how often you celebrated Mass, or administered Sacraments in that unhappy state?

Do you approach your Confessor as you would Jesus Christ?

Do you make thanksgiving after your confessions, and fulfil your penance ?

Perhaps you make choice of a Confessor, who you know will be indulgent to you, or perhaps is labouring under the same spiritual malady as yourself?

Caecus si caeco ducatum praestet, ambo in foream cadunt (*Matt. xv. 14*).

Summa vigilantiâ operam dato, ut aliquem tibi virum invenias, quem in omnibus deinceps delectae vitae studiis certissimum ducem sequaris (*S. Basil*).

PIOUS READING.

Are you in the habit of making a pious lecture every day, using for this purpose suitable books, and especially the holy Scriptures, which St. Ambrose terms “liber Sacerdotalis?”

In such reading have you in view particularly your own improvement in piety and virtue?

Books to be recommended :—

The Imitation of Christ, Selva of St. Liguori, Rodriguez on Christian Perfection, Memoriale vitae Sacerdotalis, Cardinal Bona de Sacrificio Missae, Catechism of the Council of Trent, The Lives of the Saints, Examen Cleri, Statutes of the Diocese, The Roman Ritual, &c.

SOLID PRACTICES OF DEVOTION.

What practices do you employ to maintain and augment in yourself a spirit of devotion?

Do you frequently visit our Saviour in the Blessed Sacrament?

Do you frequently reflect on the Sacred Passion of our Divine Lord ?

Do you cherish in your soul a special veneration and love for the Blessed Mother of God ?

Do you recite the Rosary and other devotions in her honour, and urge the faithful to be devout to her ?

Do you recite the " ANGELUS " morning, midday, and evening ?

Do you honour St. Joseph, foster-father of Jesus, spouse of the Blessed Virgin, and patron of the interior life ?

What is your devotion to your Guardian Angel ?

Do you think frequently of this blessed Spirit, and excite yourself to reverence, confidence, and devotion towards him ?

Reverentia pro præsentia, fiducia pro custodia, devotio pro benevolentia (S. Bernard).

Do you likewise reverence with due devotion the Apostles and other saints of God, particularly on their festivals ?

Do you avail yourself of the indulgences granted by the Church, and apply them sometimes on behalf of the poor souls in purgatory ?

Do you hold in proper esteem the pious Sodalities and Institutes of various kinds approved of by the Church, and do you derive due advantage from them for yourself and the faithful under your care ?

Does your entire house exhibit piety, so that everything is calculated to excite devotion—the pictures, the Crucifix, and other objects of piety ?

A PRIEST WITH REGARD TO HIMSELF.

CHASTITY.

How do you practise this holy virtue, and avoid the opposite vice? Examine your thoughts, words, and actions.

Are you ever careful not only to avoid the vice itself, but also everything that would expose you to such suspicion?

Do you keep a proper guard on your eyes, ears, tongue, and other senses?

Do you keep a strict watch over your mind and heart, being ever mindful that one bad desire, or one bad thought contrary to holy purity, deliberately entertained, deserves everlasting punishment?

Do you avoid all dangerous occasions? "Contra libidinis impetum apprehende fugam, si vis obtinere victoriam" (*S. August. Serm. de temp.*)

In your conversations with persons of the other sex, do you always observe a becoming gravity?

Multae amicitiae spiritu cooperunt, et carne desierunt.

Are you not more familiar than you ought with your female domestics, or any of them?

Perhaps you have as your servant a person, whose youth, appearance, manner, and dress may be an occasion of danger to yourself and disedification to others.

Periculosè tibi ministrat, cuius vultum frequentè attendis (*S. Hieron. ad Nepot.*).

Do you visit persons, or allow yourself to be visited by persons, who would be an occasion of the same danger to yourself, or of the same disedification to

others, or of suspicion hurtful to your character in this matter ?

“ Non raro sub praetextu pietatis latet viscus libidinis : experto crede, expertus loquor : vidi cedros Libani turpiter corruisse, de quorum sanctitate non magis quam de Hieronymi virtute dubitassem ” (*S. August.*)

Nec Davide sanctior, nec Samsone fortior, nec Salomon sapientior (*Ibid.*)

Caveto omnes suspiciones, ne quidquid probabilitè fangi potest, ne fingatur, ante devita (*Idem.*)

“ *Providemus autem bona non solum coram Deo, sed etiam coram hominibus* ” (*2 Cor. viii. 21.*)

Do you frequently beg of God in your prayers and sacrifices the gift of chastity ?

In the moment of temptation especially, have you immediate recourse to God and His Divine assistance ?

“ Cum me pulsat aliqua turpis cogitatio, recurro ad vulnera Christi. Tuta requies in vulneribus Salvatoris ” (*S. August. Med.*)

Do you maintain a salutary control over your passions by suitable mortifications ?

Qui autem sunt Christi, carnem suam crucifixerunt, cum vitiis et concupiscentiis (*Gal. v. 24.*)

Qui delicatè a pueritiâ nutrit servum suum, postea sentiet eum contumacem (*Prov. xxix. 21.*)

SOBRIETY.

Do you keep your appetite under due restraint in eating and drinking ?

As to drinking, is it not the cause of temptations of another kind, and have you not experienced them ?

“Nolite inebriari vino, in quo est luxuria” (Ephes. v. 18).

“Nunquam ego ebrium castum putabo” (S. Hieron.)

“Ubi ebrietas, ibi certo certius luxuria est” (S. Amb.)

Do you restrain yourself within the limits of what is becoming in the style of the entertainments, which sometimes you give perhaps under pretext of hospitality, forgetful of the wants of the poor and the various necessities of charity and religion all around?

Are you not too ready to accept invitations at the expense of your time and to the prejudice of your ministry?

“Facilè contemnitur clericus, qui saepè vocatus ad prandium ire non recusat.” (S. Hieron.)

Have you ever dishonoured yourself and the dignity of your rank by drinking to intoxication?

“Quantò melior asinus ebrioso est? Quantò canis praestantior est? Omnes certe animantes, quae rationis expertes sunt, cum bibunt et comedunt, ultra quam satis est etiamsi mille homines cogerent, nunquam biberent. Pejores igitur irrationalibus animantibus vos estis, qui inebriamini” (S. Chrysos.)

As regards the fasts and abstinences of the Church, do you observe them regularly?

MODESTY AND CLERICAL PROPRIETY.

Do you maintain this modesty and propriety in your dress, in your manner, your gait, your language, and in all your actions?

“Sic decet clericos in sortem Domini vocatos, vitam moresque suos omnes componere, ut habitū, gestū, incessū, sermone, aliisque omnibus rebus, nil nisi grave,

moderatum, ac religione plenum prae se ferant, levia etiam delicta, quae in ipsis maxima essent, effugiant, ut eorum actiones cunctis afferant venerationem" (*Concil. Trident.*, sess. xxii. c. 1).

Do you not exhibit sometimes a levity, a haughtiness, and an irritability, which are the occasions of painful observation and scandal to the faithful?

Do you not sometimes act the banterer and punster in your conversation, at the expense of the feelings of others?

Inter seculares nugae nugae sunt, in ore sacerdotis blasphemiae. Consecrasti os tuum Evangelio, talibus jam aperire illicitum, assuescere sacrilegium est (*S. Bernard de consid. lib. 2, c. 13*).

Are you careful to avoid rudeness and roughness in manner, bearing in mind that politeness, duly seasoned with gravity and humility, gains great influence and respect for the priestly character?

Is there anything to find fault with in your dress? *Vestes proprio congruentes ordini semper defer ut per decentiam habitus extrinseci, morum honestatem intrinsecam ostendas (Trid. sess. xiv. c. 6)*.

And whilst, on the one hand, you avoid what would be vain, singular, and too costly in your dress, are you careful, on the other, to avoid what would betray slovenliness, and a want of proper neatness and cleanliness?

And, as to your house, furniture, pictures, and all other matters, do they exhibit that suitableness and decency equally removed from vanity and worldly pomp, on the one side, as they should be from negligence, disorder, and filthiness on the other?

GOOD USE OF TIME.

How do you spend your time ?

How much of it do you allow to be consumed in over-much sleep, idle conversations, and unnecessary visits ?

Do you bear in mind that, if you have to give an account of every idle word, you will have to give a more rigorous account of so much time mis-spent, and which should be employed in God's service in such a variety of ways suitable to your sacred calling ?

“ Unusquisque clericus illud apud se reputare debet, se non ad inertiam neque ad ignaviam, sed ad spiritualis et ecclesiasticae militiae labores vocatum esse ” (*S. Carol. Borom. con. Med. iv.*)

What time do you give to the study of Scripture and Theology ?

Tu quidem divinas saepius Scripturas lege, imo nunquam de manibus tuis sacra lectio deponatur (*S. Hieron. ad Nepot. cler.*).

Tenenti codicem somnus obrepat, et cadentem faciem pagina sancta suscipiat (*Id. ad Eustoch.*).

Ignorantia in sacerdotibus mater est omnium errorum, qui in Ecclesia Dei oriuntur (*Concil. Tolet. iv.*).

Quia tu scientiam repulisti, et ego repellam te, ne sacerdotio fungaris mihi (*Osee iv. 6.*) 

Do you read, from time to time, the Statutes of the Diocese, the Rubrics of the Missal, and Ritual ?

Perhaps, in your reading, you allow yourself to be influenced by vanity, in order to appear more learned and accomplished than others.

Have you any order in the regulation of your time

for prayer, for study, for recreation, for meals, sleep, &c. &c. ?

“Ordo dux est ad Deum, et quae a Deo sunt, ordinata sunt” (*S. August.*)

SPIRIT OF POVERTY.

Have you kept in view that you are the minister of Him, “*qui propter vos egenus factus est, cum esset ipse dives; ut illius inopiâ vos divites essetis*” (*2 Cor. viii. 9*), and that the revenues of the Church are the patrimony of the poor, except so far as they are required to afford a becoming support to the clergy ?

Conceditur tibi, ut si benè deservis, de Altari vivas, non autem ut de Altari luxurieris, aut de Altari superbias quidquid præter necessarium victum, ac simplicem vestitum de Altari retines tuum non est, rapina est, sacrilegium est (S. Bernard ep. ad Fulcon).

Are you careful to avoid luxury and a pompous style of living on the one hand, and avarice on the other ?

Look to the furniture and style of your house, consider your table and general style of living at home, as also your dress and general appearance as you go abroad.

Take account of the entertainments you give under pretext of hospitality—the wines and meats you provide for these occasions—are they not above the becoming mediocrity, within which a Priest should restrain his habits ?

“*Excipite hospites, at illis excipiendis intra parsimoniae fines vos continete, ita ut frugalitatis, non sumptuosi convivii testes illos habeatis*” (*S. Carol. Borom. in Concil. Mediol. iv. p. 3, c. 7*).

And if you spend the income, which you derive from your sacred ministry in this way, how will you withstand the murmurs and complaints of the poor ?

Clamant vero nudi, clamant famelici, conqueruntur et dicunt : Nobis frigore et fame miserabilitè laborantibus quid conferunt ista ? Nostrum est, quod effunditis : nobis crudelitè subtrahitur, quod inanitè expenditis (*S. Bernard, de moribus Episcop. c. 2*).

AVARICE.

Do you constantly keep in mind the inheritance you have chosen ?

Dominus pars haereditatis meae et calicis mei (Ps. xv.)

Perhaps you deceive yourself, regarding as a just economy what is real avarice.

“ Quam multi sacerdotes aliàs boni, modesti, et integrae vitae, studiosi, exemplares ; sed haec maledicta tenacitas et avaritia eos Deo et populis suis reddit exosos, ac eorum vitae et predicationibus omnem adimit fidem ” (*Act. Mediol. Eccles. part. 7*).

Do you not exact your dues with too much strictness and severity ?

Do you not often speak about dues to your people in a tone and manner betraying a covetous heart ?

Non quaero quae vestra sunt, sed vos (2 Cor. xii. 14).

Contrary to this maxim, do you not make gain godliness ?

Existimantes quaestum esse pietatem (1 Tim. vi. 5).

How do you attend to the poor, and try to relieve their miseries ?

Praecepto Divino mandatum est omnibus, quibus

animatorum cura commissa est, pauperum aliarumque miserabilium personarum curam paternam gerere. (*Trid. Sess. xxiii. c. 1.*).

Do you contribute according to your means to works of religion and charity?

Si multum tibi fuerit, abundantè tribue: si exiguum tibi fuerit, etiam exiguum libenter impetriri stude (*Tob. iv. 9.*).

For whom are you laying up store?

Sancta synodus omnino interdicit, ne ex redditibus Ecclesiae consanguineos familiaresve suos augere studeant (*Trid. Sess. xxv. c. 1.*).

Have you your will made, and what are its provisions?

Perhaps you are engaged in some worldly speculation or business contrary to the precept of the Apostle, “*Nemo militans Deo implicat se negotiis saecularibus,*” and forgetful of the maxim of the same Apostle, “*qui volunt divites fieri, incident in tentationem et laqueum diaboli*” (*1 Tim. vi. 9.*).

Do you faithfully discharge your Mass obligations?

If unable on account of bad health or old age to discharge your duties, perhaps you are deterred from procuring the help you require through fear of your revenues becoming diminished?

Omnia vitia senescunt, senescente homine, sola avaritia non senescit (*S. Gregor. M. Moral. L. xv., c. 11.*).

Do you keep in mind the woes pronounced by the Holy Ghost against the rich, and which apply with special force to the Priest, who has heaped up riches in the sanctuary of the God of poverty?

“*Agite nunc divites, plorate ululantes in miseriis vestris,*

quae advenient vobis. Divitiae vestrae putrefactae sunt : et vestimenta vestra a tineis, comesta sunt. Aurum et argentum vestrum aeruginavit; et aerugo eorum in testimonium vobis erit, et manducabit carnes vestras sicut ignis. Thesaurizastis vobis iram in novissimis diebus " (S. Jac. v.)

HUMILITY.

What esteem have you for this fundamental virtue, and how do you endeavour to practise it ?

On the contrary, do you not yield to the opposite vice of pride, which, according to St. Gregory, is the queen of vices, and the most evident mark of the reprobate, as humility is of the elect ?

Do you not take complacency in your works, and the esteem of men ?

Do you not even in your sacred functions look for the applause of men, so as to be more solicitous for your own reputation than for the glory of God ?

" *Cum feceritis omnia quae pracepta sunt vobis, dicite ; servi inutiles sumus ; quod debuimus facere fecimus*" (Luc. xvii. 10).

Do you not fret and abandon yourself to dejection, when things do not succeed with you, when you fail in obtaining praise, when others are more thought of and spoken of ?

Do you not seek to engage the notice of others by speaking of yourself and of your works and undertakings ?

Do you not arrogantly presume on yourself, and judge and condemn others and their mode of acting ?

Do you not rely on your opinion and judgment,

disdaining the advice of others, regardless of the advice of the Holy Ghost : “*Tibi sin consilio nihil facias, et post factum non poenitebit*” (*Eccl. xxxii. 24*).

On this account have you not disputes sometimes with your brother Priests, or with your parishioners ?

Are you not indignant on account of your pride, that you are passed over, and others promoted above you, forgetting you are the disciple of Him “*qui non venit ut ministraretur ei, sed ut ministraret*” (*Marc. x. 45*).

A PRIEST IN REFERENCE TO HIS NEIGHBOUR.

FIRST IN REFERENCE TO SUPERIORS.

Do you receive with due reverence and submission all orders and decisions, not only of the Supreme Pontiff, but also of those who derive their authority from him, such as the Sacred Penitentiary Congregation of Rites, &c. ?

Do you faithfully render to your Bishop the reverence and obedience you promised in your ordination ?

Are you satisfied with the position and rank and office that are assigned you ?

Have you recourse to your Bishop to consult him, and take his direction in all important matters ?

“*Episcopum sequimini sicut Jesus Christus Patrem : terrible est enim, tali contradicere.*” (*St. Ignat. mart. Ep. ad Mag.*)

Do you likewise exhibit becoming respect and obedience to all other ecclesiastical superiors, vicars-general deans, chapter, parish priest, &c., bearing in mind the divine command—“*Obedite prpositis vestris, subiacete eis*” (*Heb. xiii. 17*).

Perhaps, examining your interior, you will find some lurking aversion and disrespect towards your superiors.

Perhaps you allow yourself at times, the liberty of criticising and condemning their words and acts.

Perhaps even, you sometimes carry your disrespect to superiors so far as openly to contradict and oppose them.

Perhaps you have been in particular circumstances the cause or wilful occasion of division and strife amongst the clergy, or laity, or both, so as to renew the party words, “*Ego quidem sum Pauli ; Ego autem Apollo ; Ego vero Cephae* (*1 Cor. i. 12*). ”

Do you observe with all dutifulness the statutes of the diocese and all ordinances of your Bishop ?

A PRIEST TOWARDS HIS EQUALS.

Are you careful to maintain with the clergy, regular and secular, “*The unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ?*” (*Eph. iv., 3*).

Do you carefully avoid whatever would disturb peace and union between yourself and your brethren in the ministry ?

“*Dominus detestatur eum, qui seminat inter fratres discordias*” (*Prov. vi. 16, 19*).

Do you perform your duties in concord with your colleagues or fellow-labourers in the same parish according to the Apostle, “*Eandem charitatem habentes, unanimis, id ipsum sentientes. Nihil per contentionem, neque per inanem gloriam ; sed in humilitate, superiores sibi invicem arbitrantes ; non quae sua sunt singuli considerantes, sed ea quae aliorum ?*” (*Philip ii. 2, 3, 4*).

Do you not meddle sometimes in concerns belonging to the parishes of others, and criticise their zeal?

“Charitas non aemulatur, non inflatur, non est ambitiosa” (1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5).

Do you not allow your mind to be disturbed with envy and jealousy with regard to others, which makes you less kind and friendly towards them, and perhaps put an evil interpretation on their doings and undertakings?

Are you not too tenacious of points, and on that account allow yourself to become easily vexed and difficult to be appeased?

“Qui ad indignandum facilis est, erit ad peccandum proclivior” (Prov. xxix. 22).

Stultas et sine disciplinâ quaestiones derita, sciens quia generant lites (2 Tim. ii. 23).

Do you restrain your tongue from detraction according to the maxim, *“Audisti verbum adversus proximum tuum, commoriatur in te?”* (Eccli. xix. 10).

“Fili mi, cum detractoribus ne commiscearis, quoniam repente consurgit perditio eorum” (Prov. xxiv. 21).

Do you not sometimes deal in a despotic manner with your colleagues in the ministry, speaking harshly to them, readily believing stories of them from servants and others?

And with regard to your younger brethren in the ministry, who, on account of their age and inexperience, depend upon you for advice and charitable correction, do you render them the charity which they stand in need of for their direction?

“Qui cum sapientibus graditur, sapiens erit. Amicus stultorum similis efficietur” (Prov. xiii. 20).

A PRIEST IN REFERENCE TO THOSE BENEATH HIM.

Do you behave towards those beneath you in position with kindness and amiability, trying, with St. Paul, to become all things to all men, that you may save all ? (*1 Cor. ix. 23*).

Perhaps, from the position of authority which you hold, you have contracted an imperious manner towards those under you, using threats and other harsh modes of expression, acting on their fears, and not seeking to gain their affections ?

“Facti sumus parvuli in medio vestrum tanquam si nutrix foveat filios suos” (*1 Thess. ii. 7*).

Discite subditorum matres vos esse debere non dominos ; studete magis amari quam metui : et si quando severitate opus sit, paterna sit, non tyrannica (*S. Bern. Serm. 23*).

Do you not sometimes show yourself morose and impatient on account of the weight of business you have to attend to, or ill-health ?

What efforts do you make to restrain your temper, so as to avoid choleric and impatient language when things occur to annoy you ?

“Quemadmodum commoto coeno, faetor effunditur, sic animo irâ permoto multa oriatur turpitudo, et vitiorum graveolentia” (*S. Chrys. hom. 48*).

Do you pardon injuries, calumnies, and persecutions, according to the maxim of the Gospel ?

“Beati estis cum maledixerint vos homines, et persecuti vos fuerint, et dixerint omne malum adversum vos. . . . guadete, et exultate, quia merces vestra multa est in caelo” (*Matt. v. 11, 12*).

What is your manner and conduct towards the poor?

Do you love them in the spirit of our Lord, and treat them with all kindness and tenderness; or, on the contrary, do you despise them, and treat them with disdain?

And towards your servants, what is your mode of acting?

Perhaps you are harsh, or perhaps, on the contrary, you are too familiar?

What care do you take to maintain morality and virtue amongst them?

“Non oportet, ut vitia domus tuae ultimus cognoscas, quod quam plurimis novimus contigisse” (*S. Bern. de consid. L. iv. c. 6.*)

Perhaps you allow them to be unmannerly and disrespectful to your curates, or to meddle in matters connected with the administration of the parish?

Do you reflect upon how much edification or scandal depends on the conduct and example of your domestics?

“Si quis domui sua praecesse nescit, quomodo Ecclesiae Dei diligentiam habebit?” (*1 Tim. iii.*)

“Si quis suorum et maximè domesticorum curam non habet, fidem negavit, et est infideli deterior” (*1 Tim. v. 8.*)

A PRIEST AS PASTOR OF SOULS.

Are you the good Pastor, prepared to lay down your life for your sheep?

Do you feed them by instructing them, administering the Sacraments to them, and properly performing your other pastoral duties?

Do you keep before your mind constantly the responsibility you have contracted before God in their regard—a responsibility which so few adequately discharge, on which account St. Chrysostom does not hesitate to say : “ Non temere dico, sed ut affectus sum ac sentio ; non arbitror inter Sacerdotes esse multos, qui salvi fiant, sed multo plures, qui pereant ? ” (*Hom. ii. in Act. Apost.*)

ZEAL FOR SOULS.

“ Mira res ! ” says St. Bernard, “ cadit asina, et est qui sublevet ; perit anima, et nemo est qui reputet.” (*De consid. L. iv. c. 6.*)

How do you feel affected towards poor sinners in your flock ?

Is it with the sorrow of your Saviour weeping over the devoted Jerusalem ? “ *Videns civitatem flevit super illam* ” (*Luke xix. 41.*)

Have you the spirit of the Apostle, who testifies of himself, “ *Tristitia mihi magna est, et continuus dolor cordi meo. Optabam enim ego anathema esse a Christo pro fratribus meis ?* ” (*Rom. ix. 2, 3.*)

Do you meditate sometimes upon the glory of God, the price He has paid for the souls confided to your care, and the strict account you will have to render to the Supreme Pastor ?

“ *Quis potest dicere se diligere Deum, qui ejus imaginem videt in sterquilinio jacere, et non curat* ” (*S. Bonavent. Pharetr. div. amor.*)

“ *Vos estis Presbyteri Dei, et ex vobis pendet anima illorum* ” (*Judith, viii. 21.*)

Do you reflect on the great work of converting sinners to God ?

“ Majus opus est ex impio justum facere, quam creare coelum et terram ” (*S. August. Tract. 52 in Joan.*)

“ Commissa tibi est villicatio gravis; villicationis hujus rationem exactissimam requiret terribilis in judiciis suis Deus ” (*Pet. Blss.*)

Is your zeal pure, divested of self-interest, and concerned exclusively for the salvation of souls ?

“ Daemon clamat, da animas, caetera tolle tibi, et quid tu ? ” (*S. Carol. Borrom.*)

Is your zeal universal without respect of persons ?

Is your zeal active ?

“ *Ego quidem libentissimè impendam et superimpendar ipse pro animabus vestris* ” (*2 Cor. xii. 15.*)

An non pro grege tuo Christus sanguinem suum fudit ? Tu vero requiem quaeris ? Quid potest pejus esse ejusmodi pastoribus ? (*S. Chrys. Hom. in ep. ad Rom.*)

Is your zeal moderate and prudent, free from impetuosity and indiscretion ?

“ *Non in commotione Dominus* ” (*3 Reg. xix. 11.*)

“ *Estote prudentes sicut serpentes, et simplices sicut columbae* ” (*Matt. x. 16.*)

Is your zeal meek ?

“ *Filioli mei, quos iterum parturio, donec formetur Christus in vobis* ” (*Gal. iv. 19.*)

“ *Testis est mihi Deus, quomodo cupiam vos omnes in visceribus Christi* ” (*Philip i. 8.*)

“ *Servum Dei non oportet litigare, sed mansuetum esse ad omnes, cum modestiâ corripientem eos qui resistunt veritati* ” (*2 Tim. ii. 24.*)

Is your zeal persevering, bearing contradictions, delays, disappointments, &c. ?

“Ecce, agricola expectat pretiosum fructum terrae, patienter ferens donec accipiat temporaneum et serotinum” (Jac. v. 7).

Is your zeal universal, extending to your entire flock and every member of it, and employing all means in your power, exhorting, instructing, correcting, looking especially after the lost sheep—in a word, leaving nothing undone that belongs to the duty of “the good shepherd?”

“Ecce ego ipse requiram oves meas, et visitabo eas” (Ezech. xxxiv. 11).

“Vos scitis quomodo docerem vos publicè et per domos, . . . quapropter contestor vos hodiernâ die quia mundus sum a sanguine omnium . . . quoniam per triennium nocte et die, non cessavi cum lacrymis monere unumquemque vestrum” (Act Apost. xx.)

What care do you take, especially of the children, to have them properly instructed and duly prepared for the sacraments?

Do you afford all convenient opportunities to your flock for frequenting the sacraments?

Do you encourage pious reading amongst your people, and do you try to induce them to procure pious books to read in their families?

Do you promote and maintain pious associations in your parish, such as the Confraternity of the Christian Doctrine, Sodality of the Living Rosary, St. Vincent de Paul’s Society, and such like works of religion and charity?

INSTRUCTION.

Do you feel as you ought your obligation of instructing the faithful?

“Testificor coram Deo et Jesu Christo, qui judicaturus est vivos et mortuos, per adventum ipsius et regnum ejus; praedica verbum, insta opportunè importunè, argue, obsecra, increpa in omni patientiâ et doctrinâ” (2 Tim. iv.)

“Pro Christo legatione fungimur, tanquam Deo exhortante per nos” (2 Cor. v. 20).

THE INSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN.

Do you take all due care to have the children of your parish properly instructed in the Christian Doctrine?

What means do you employ to that effect in the schools of your parish, in your churches on Sundays, and in private families by means of parents or others?

When admitting them to sacraments, especially to Confirmation and First Communion, do you take care that they are thoroughly instructed in the Christian Doctrine?

Do you yourself explain the Catechism to the children, and have you any appointed occasions for this duty?

Do you take care that the school-teachers, male and female, be persons of exemplary conduct, so as to show good example to the children?

Do you take care that none of your children frequent proselytizing or heretical schools?

PREACHING.

Do you preach to the people on all Sundays and

Holidays, looking upon this as a chief duty of your office as a Pastor of souls ?

“ Si evangelizavero, non est mihi gloria, necessitas enim mihi incumbit; vae enim mihi est, si non evangelizavero” (1 Cor. ix. 16).

And the holy Council of Trent, fixing this obligation by rule, ordained as follows :—“ Archipresbyteri quoque plebani, et quicumque parochiales, vel alias curam animarum habentes ecclesias, quocumque modo obtineant, per se, vel per alios idoneos, si legitime impediti fuerint, diebus saltem dominicis, et festis solemnibus, plebes sibi commissas pro suâ et earum capacitate pascant salutaribus verbis, docendo quae scire omnibus necessaria sunt ad salutem, annuntiandoque eis cum brevitate et facilitate sermonis vitia, quae eos declinare, et virtutes, quas sectari oportet, ut poenam aeternam evadere et coelestem gloriam consequi valeant. Id vero si quis eorum praestare neglexerit, per censuras ecclesiasticas, seu aliâs ad Episcopi arbitrium cogantur ” (Sess. v., c 2.)

And again the same holy Council ordains :—“ Ut parochi inter missarum solemnia, aut divinorum celebrationem sacra eloquia, et salutis monita lingua vernacula singulis diebus festis vel solemnibus explanent, eademque in omnium cordibus, postpositis inutilibus quaestionibus, inserere, atque eos in lege Domini erudire studeant ” (Sess. xxiv. c. 7).

Perhaps you excuse yourself on the pretence of not having a free command of language.

St. Francis de Sales would reply :—“ Nihil impossibile amanti Deum. Pectus est quod disertos facit.”

Do you preach with a pure intention, solicitous only for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and not seeking your own glory and the esteem of men ?

What preparation do you make for preaching ?

Do you earnestly implore the divine assistance : “ Ut Spiritus Sanctus se verbis tuis insinuet, cordaque auditorum penetret, qui solus claves habet, et aperit, quando vult ? ” (*S. Franc. Borg.*)

Do you endeavour by previous meditation and study to prepare what you are to say to the people ?

“ Ecce ex oblatione fidelium vivimus,” says St. Gregory the Great (*Homil. 17*), “ nec tamen studio praedicationis, ut dignum est, insudamus.”

What are the subjects you usually speak on in your sermons ? The Council of Trent points them out :— “ Docens quae scire omnibus necessaria sunt ad salutem, annuntiandoque eis vitia, quae eos declinare, et virtutes quas sectari oportet, ut poenam aeternam evadere, et coelestem gloriam consequi valeant ” (*Sess. v. c. 2*).

What is your style of speaking ? Again the Council of Trent tells what it should be :— “ Ut plebes sibi commissas pro suâ et earum capacitate pascant salutaribus verbis ” (*Ibid.*)

And the Apostle, speaking of himself and his style of preaching, says :— “ Et ego, cum venissem ad vos, fratres, veni non in sublimitate sermonis aut sapientiae, annuntians vobis testimonium Christi. Et sermo meus et praedicatio mea non in persuasilibus humanae sapientiae verbis, sed in ostensione spiritus et virtutis ” (*1 Cor. ii. 1, 4*).

Are you careful in your preaching to avoid all harshness and bitterness?

“Ipsa reprehensio commiserationem ostendat, non indignationem, aut odium cuiusquam. Incredibili dictu est, quanto studio daemon Evangelico melli fel admiscere in reprehendendo conetur, ut multos hâc ratione ab audiendis concionibus deterreat, vel invidiam et odium zelotis Ecclesiasticis conciliet” (*S. Franc. Borg. de rat. conc.*)

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS.

In the administration of the Sacraments do you observe all the rites and ceremonies prescribed?

“Si quis dixerit receptos et approbatos Ecclesiæ Catholicæ ritus in solemnî Sacramentorum administratione adhiberi consuetos aut contemni, aut sine peccato a ministris pro libitû omitti, aut in novos alios per quemcumque Ecclesiarum pastorem mutari posse, anathema sit” (*Trid. Sess. vii. Can. 13*).

Do you ever come to the administration of the Sacraments in the state of mortal sin?

If being in this lamentable state, and not having an opportunity of confession, do you excite yourself to true and profound contrition?

Impure et indignè ea ministrantes aeternae mortis reatum incurunt (Rit. Rom).

When about administering any Sacrament do you recollect yourself, in order to reflect upon the sacred action you are going to perform, and to dispose yourself to perform it in a proper spirit and a worthy manner?

Do you use the prescribed vestments in the act of officiating ?

Do you pronounce all the words, especially those that are essential to the validity, with attention, distinctness, and piety ?

Do you not sometimes mutter the prayers in a hurried, indistinct manner ?

Do you keep the holy oils properly under lock and key in a becoming place—not, however, in the Tabernacle ?

BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION.

In administering Baptism, do you take care that in pouring on the water there be a real washing, and that you pronounce the words at the same time ?

Do you observe strictly all the exorcisms and ceremonies prescribed by the Ritual ?

Are you careful not to allow heretics or infidels to be sponsors, or even Catholics leading disedifying lives ?

Do you duly register each Baptism when performed ?

Do you instruct the faithful, especially midwives, in the manner of administering private Baptism in case of necessity ?

As regards Confirmation, are you careful to induce the faithful to avail themselves of the opportunities afforded them of receiving this sacrament ? and do you duly instruct them, and prepare them beforehand ?

Do you explain to the sponsors, both in Baptism and Confirmation, the matrimonial impediments they contract ?

THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

Do you take the utmost care to keep and administer

this most Holy Mystery with all due devotion and reverence? *Nihil dignius, nihil sanctius et admirabilius habet Ecclesia Dei (Rit. Rom).*

Is your Tabernacle properly clean, duly ornamented inside, and secure against sacrilege?

Are you careful to keep the key in proper custody?

Do you keep a light constantly burning before it?

Are your altars covered with three cloths, and are your corporals, purificators, palls, &c., of linen, not of cotton?

Do you see they are washed in proper time and always kept clean?

Perhaps by neglecting to wash them you allow them to become so soiled, as that you would feel ashamed to lay a tablecloth or a napkin in such a state before a friend or guest for breakfast or dinner?

“*Si Pater Ego sum, ubi est honor meus? Et si Dominus Ego sum, ubi est timor meus?*” (*Mal. i. 6.*)

Are all your sacred vessels, chalices, ciboria, ostensories, &c., in a proper state, clean and bright?

Do you see that the Adorable Sacrament be renewed in the ciborium and ostensorial every week, especially in damp weather and if your church be damp, and that in no case you allow a fortnight to elapse without renewing it?

Do you administer the Holy Communion with the solemnity and devotion suited to so holy a function?

Or perhaps you allow yourself to be hurried, so as to disedify the faithful and run the risk of the Holy Sacrament falling from your fingers on the ground?

When giving Communion out of Mass do you take

care to purify your fingers, and have you a vase and purificator on the altar for this purpose ?

In what manner do you keep your Pixis for the Communion of the sick ?

Is it of silver, gilt inside, with a little corporal and purificator of linen in a silk case ?

If you be obliged to keep it in your house, do you keep it in a place apart specially destined for the purpose ? and in going to the sick do you carry it, as the Rubrics direct, with all devotion and reverence ?

Do you admonish your people to make due preparation by having the chamber clean and a table furnished with a linen cloth, candle, and holy water ?

Do you strictly observe all that the Ritual directs respecting the visitation of the sick ?

Do you try to promote devotion amongst your people to the Most Holy Sacrament, by occasional Processions, Expositions, Benedictions, Visits, &c. ?

Do you, from time to time, instruct them upon this Divine Mystery, and recommend to them books of devotion in reference to it ?

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

Do you frequently reflect on the importance of your ministry with respect to the Sacrament of Penance ?
“Ars est artium regimen animarum” (*S. Greg. M. reg. past. i. c. 1.*)

“Dentur idonei confessarii, ecce omnium christiano-rum plena reformatio” (*S. Pius V.*)

Are you assiduous in this ministry, affording the faithful all convenient opportunities of coming fre-

quently to confession, more especially on the eves of festivals ?

“ *Ego autem libertissimè impendam et superimpendar ipse pro animabus vestris* ” (2 Cor. xii. 15).

Perhaps instead of encouraging, you rather discourage the frequent approach of your people to the holy tribunal by your irregular attendance and the reluctance you show when called upon ?

“ *Vae vobis . . . clauditis regnum caelorum ante homines, vos enim non intratis, nec introeuntes sinitis intrare* ” (Matt. xxiii. 13).

In order that you may hear confessions with fruit, do you prepare yourself both remotely and proximately ?

For the remote preparation, do you lay up and preserve a store of knowledge and prudence together with the greatest charity ?

“ *Necesse est, ut confessarius plenus sit charitate, scientiâ et prudentiâ, si enim vel unum trium horum deficiat, sibi ipsi et aliis periculosus est.* ” (S. Franc. Sal.)

Do you endeavour by constant study to acquire and maintain the knowledge requisite for the holy tribunal ?

Are you fully acquainted with the reserved censures and reserved cases limiting your powers in the confessional ?

Are you thoroughly familiar with all the impediments of matrimony, as also the principles of justice and contracts ?

Do you understand how to deal with habitual and relapsing sinners, and such as are in the proximate occasion of sin ?

When you are not quite sure of the decision you

should make in any particular case, do you take time to study the case or consult about it?

As to the proximate preparation, do you come to this holy ministry with all due purity of intention, in a proper state of conscience, and imploring the Divine assistance?

“*Priusquam ad confessionem audiendam accedas, si tempus suppetat, Divinum auxilium piis precibus imploras*” (*Rit. Rom.*)

In what manner do you hear confessions?

Do you worthily act the part of a father, a physician, a doctor, and a judge?

Of a father—“*Mementote a misericordiis poenitentibus patrum nomine compellari vos, quia reipsa animum erga ipsos habere debetis verè paternum, recipiendo ipsos summâ cum charitate, sufferendo patienter eorum rusticitatem, ignorantiam, imbecillitatem, tarditatem aliasque imperfectiones. Tametsi enim filius prodigus nudus planè, sordidus, et foetidus, ab harâ porcorum redibat; benignus tamen pater eum amplectitur, amantè osculatur, et super collum ejus, ruens lacrimatur eo quod esset ipsius pater, et cor paternum teneriori affectu erga filios soleat commoveri*

” (*S. Franc. Sal.*)

Is it thus you receive your penitents of every condition of life, who seek you as a father in the holy tribunal?

Do you not sometimes by your words or manner exhibit displeasure and indignation?

Do you not sometimes interrupt your penitent in a choleric, ill-tempered way, so as to lock up his heart and imperil the integrity of confession?

Has not this sort of manner discouraged poor sinners from coming to you, and so far rendered your ministry sterile as regards the sacrament of Penance ?

Do you assist your penitents with all benignity and zeal to make their confession ?

When you are obliged to defer absolution, do you do so with such kindness of manner as to encourage their return at the time you appoint ?

“ Maxime verendum est ne semel dimissi amplius non redeant ” (*Catec. Rom.* p. 2, c. 5, q. 51).

Do you endeavour, according to the advice of Pope Leo XII., to dispose for absolution those who come indisposed, as far as you can ?

“ Ex imparatis ad absolutionem paratos saepe fieri posse, si confessarius sciat studiosè, mansuetè, et pati-enter cum ipsis agere ” (*Leo XII. Eneycl. Jubil.*)

Do you act the part of a painstaking physician, omitting nothing that could conduce to the spiritual health of your penitent ?

Do you aid the penitent in explaining the species, the number, and the circumstances of his sins, so far as it may be necessary to explain them ?

Or rather are you not of the number of those confessors of whom Benedict XIV. complains :—“ Qui nullâ tacti solicitudine poenitentes tantùm audiunt, non monent, non interrogant, sed expletâ criminum enumeratione absolutionis formam illicò proferunt ? ”

Or perhaps by useless and indiscreet interrogations the penitent may become acquainted with sins, the ignorance of which would be his best preservative against them ?

As regards sins contrary to the holy virtue of purity, are you careful, as St. Charles Borromeo directs, that, whilst, on the one hand, you assist the penitent in the confession of such sins, lest otherwise he would not sufficiently confess them, on the other hand, you make use of all possible prudence and diligence with females and young people, lest you would shock or disedify them by the language you use, or by the nature of your interrogations ?

In the penances you enjoin, have you regard to the spiritual health of your penitents ?

Do you endeavour to secure the removal of occasions and root out evil habits ?

Do you prudently provide against relapse ?

Are you in the habit of addressing a few appropriate and effective words to your penitents before absolution, to dispose them for the grace of the sacrament by a sincere sorrow and hatred of sin, and a firm and efficacious purpose of amendment ?

With a view to their perseverance, do you recommend your penitents to avoid the occasions of sin, to frequent the sacraments, to read pious books, to think on the Passion of our Divine Lord, death, judgment, hell and eternity, to renew their good resolutions every morning, to examine their conscience every evening, and to invoke frequently the sacred names of Jesus and Mary ?

Do you see to the cases where general confessions are necessary or useful ?

With this view do you sometimes inquire of your penitents respecting their past life, when you have just

reason to suspect that through shame or any other motive they may have omitted some sins in their past confessions ?

Do you treat scrupulous and difficult penitents with all the patience and charity necessary ?

In appointing penances, have you due regard, as the Roman Ritual prescribes, to the state, condition, sex, and age, as likewise the dispositions, of the penitent ?

Do you properly act the part of a judge in the holy tribunal without any respect of persons ?

Do you avoid excessive rigour, on the one side, and laxity on the other ?

“Cavenda est conscientia nimis larga, et nimis stricta, nam prima generat præsumptionem, secunda desperationem.” (*S. Bonavent. Com. Theol. de Verit. l. ii. c. 32.*)

Do you not sometimes decide cases and questions without due consideration ?

Do you take care to consider when and to whom you should give or deny absolution ?

Do you pay particular attention to persons in the proximate occasion of sin to habitual and relapsing sinners ?

And even with respect to venial sins, and penitents who have nearly the same sins always to confess, do you take care that they have true sorrow and an earnest purpose of amendment with regard to these sins, or at least some one of them ?

“O, quot confessiones invalidae (quae in se vera sunt sacrilegia) fiunt, eo quod confessarii hâc in re sunt negligentes !” (*S. Liguor.*)

How do you act with young people ?

“ Cum pueris adhibere debet confessarius omnem charitatem et modos suaviores, quantum fieri potest ”
(*St. Liguor.*)

Do you interrogate them and assist them with all gentleness, lest they keep back their sins ?

How do you act with Priests ?

“ In excipiendis sacerdotum confessionibus reverenter se gerat, sed etiam fortiter in faciendis debitibus correctionibus et in deneganda absolutione, quoties oportet ”
(*S. Liguor. Prax. Conf. c. 10.*)

Do you reflect in hearing the confession of a Priest that you should feel concerned not only for his salvation but for the salvation of the souls confided to his care as well, and that you will have to render an account accordingly ?

Do you treat him with that holy liberty which your office of confessor in his regard requires, putting away all human respect, though he be your colleague, your particular friend, or perchance your superior.

“ Senti de Augustino quidquid libet, dummodo conscientia mea in oculis Dei me non accuset ” (*S. August. L. contra Manich.*)

Are you satisfied with whatever way he confesses, or do you sometimes interrogate him in matters relating to his duties ?

Do you see to occasions of sin to which he may be exposed, bad habits that are growing upon him, or relapses, against which he should be more careful ?

Do you see that he attend to those observances so necessary to prevent the salt from losing its savour, such

as his annual retreat, spiritual reading, holy meditation, daily examination of his conscience, &c. &c. ?

Perhaps immediately before and after confession you allow yourself to indulge in idle conversation with him, without giving him time to prepare beforehand or to make his thanksgiving after ?

How do you keep the holy seal of confession ?

Are you not too free in speaking about the confessional, so as to incur the danger of rendering it odious, or of shocking the feelings of penitents, speaking of cases you have met, complaining, though in a general way, of the stupidity of some, the ignorance of others, &c. ?

Do you not permit yourself even to make the things you hear in confession a subject of joke and pleasantry ?

Are you sufficiently cautious in consulting others about cases of conscience you have to decide in the confessional ?

Do you ask the name of the accomplice or anything else that you have no right to inquire about ?

Do you not allow yourself to become sometimes so distracted, that you have to inquire again, and make the penitent repeat what he has already mentioned ?

Perhaps you allow yourself sometimes to be carried away by temper, so as even to be noticed by those outside the confessional ?

Do you consult for perfect liberty of conscience by leaving your parishioners or penitents free to address themselves to other confessors, and by sometimes even procuring for them the advantage of other confessors ?

In hearing the confessions of females, are you careful to keep the strictest guard over your senses, as well

internal as external, to avoid all manner that would be too familiar, to mix gravity with mildness, and avoid all interrogations except such as duty absolutely requires ?

EXTREME UNCTION AND CARE OF THE SICK.

Do you from time to time instruct your people on the importance of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, and exhort them to send for the Priest in proper time, so that the sick be anointed before they become unconscious ?

Do you attend to the direction of the Roman Ritual, which prescribes that this Sacrament be administered not only to such as having come to the use of reason are so seriously ill, that their life appears to be in imminent danger, but also to persons worn out by age, who, without any other disease, are from day to day in danger of dying from age alone ?

In visiting the sick do you instruct and dispose them for the Sacrament, and do you administer it with all due devotion and solemnity ?

And even after anointing them, do you frequently visit them in order to fortify, encourage, and console them in their last struggle, and give them the benefit of the Sacraments again and again ?

Alas ! the sentence, "*Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem aeternum, quia infirmus eram, et non visitastis me*" (*Matt. xxv. 41-43*).

When called to attend the sick do you not sometimes delay too long ?

Do you sometimes read the instructions contained in the Roman Ritual respecting the visitation and care of the sick that you may diligently observe them ?

Do you take all possible care that the sick person makes a good confession ?

Do you ask him if he have any trouble on his mind about his past confessions, or if there be any sin of his past life, which he did not sufficiently explain, and which he would wish now to explain more fully ?

“ O quanta vulnera saepius invenies ! quales iniquitates, quas nisi prudenter extorseris, retinebunt aegroti usque ad mortem, et quae cum illis in pulvere dormient ! O, quale servitium praestitisti, si abominabile hoc secretum fregisti ! qualem consolationem infirmo suppeditasti ! quale obstaculum ad salutem amovisti ! Beatus es, O fili, si id feceris ” (*Memor. vitae Sacerd. c. 50*).

Do you manage so that the sick be afforded the advantage of the holy Viaticum again and again, more particularly if the sickness be protracted and they themselves desire this great blessing ?

When death approaches, do you do everything you can, as a Pastor and a Father, for the poor departing soul, feeling that, as this is in a special manner the time of the devil, so likewise should it be in a special manner your time too ?

“ *Habens iram magnam, sciens quod modicum tempus habet* ” (*Apoc. xii. 12*).

Do you take particular care of young people, even of children, when dying, in whom “ malitia supplet aetatem ? ”

Do you suggest pious aspirations and ejaculations to the dying person which he would use to raise his soul to God and repel the assaults of the devil ?

Do you exhort the people of the house to aid him by

praying with him, and for him, more especially when the last struggle has set in ?

Do you suggest to him the frequent invocation of the holy names of Jesus and Mary, and do you recommend the people of the house to pronounce these holy names frequently in his ears when on his passage into eternity ?

In your attendance on the sick, do you bear in mind the opinion of theologians, that in dying we are bound to make acts of faith, hope, and charity, and do you assist the sick to make these Divine acts ?

Do you dispense to them the plenary indulgence granted for the hour of death ?

Do you, in a word, render to the sick and dying all spiritual succour, which your duty as a Pastor of souls requires of you, and which the charity of the tenderest of fathers suggests ?

“ O, si per culpam tuam una tantum anima gratiâ sanctificante in ultimo periculo privaretur, si per negligentiam tuam, absolutione, sacro Viatico, ultimâ unctione careret, et idcirco criminibus cooperta coram Deo sistetur, et judicata damnaretur, quale crimen commisisses ! qualis ultio te maneret ! in saecula saeculorum malediceret tibi perdita anima ” (*Mem. vit. Sac. c. 50*).

HOLY ORDERS.

If amongst your flock you have any young man aspiring to the Priesthood, do you take account of your responsibility in his regard to be in proportion with the high and holy state he has in view ?

Is there anything in the life or manners or reputation

of his parents, family, or near relations, that would be a reproach to him, or cast a reflection on the Church, were he to be admitted to the Divine Ministry?

The Gospel notices how the parents of the Baptist “*were both just before God, walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord without blame*” (*Luke i. 6*).

Has he himself been from his early years remarkable for his modesty, mildness, and humility, keeping away from the companionship of ill-conducted youths of his own age?

Talis enim decebat, ut nobis esset Pontifex, sanctus, innocens, impollutus, segregatus a peccatoribus. (*Heb. vii. 26.*)

Have you reason to believe that his vocation is “*non ex sanguinibus, neque ex voluntate carnis, neque ex voluntate viri, sed ex Deo*” (*Joan. i. 13*), keeping in view the principle, “*nec quisquam sumit sibi honorem, sed qui vocatur a Deo tanquam Aaron?*” (*Heb. v. 4*).

As he has been advancing in years has he been advancing in virtue?

Proficiebat sapientia, et aetate, et gratia apud Deum et homines (*Luc. ii. 52*).

As he has been home for his vacation, was he edifying in his manners and the observance of his religious duties, especially the frequenting of the Sacraments, so that the faithful, admiring him, said amongst themselves: “*Quis putas puer iste erit? Etenim manus Domini erat cum illo?*” (*Luc. i. 66*).

Exemplum esto fidelium in verbo, in conversatione, in charitate, in fide, in castitate (*1 Tim. iv. 12*).

Have you found him ready and zealous to assist you in preparing the children of the parish for Confirmation and first Communion, as also in teaching the Catechism and the Serving of Mass ?

Perhaps you have observed in him certain tendencies which College discipline keeps under restraint, but which manifest themselves when he is free to indulge them in vacation—tendencies giving reason to fear for the future? In this respect a vacation is an essay to prove his capability of self-guidance, which cannot be so well tested in College.

Have you given a strict account to the Superiors of the College of anything you had to notice in his conduct as unworthy of one aspiring to the Priesthood, bearing in mind the obligation before God you are under of doing so, in view of the momentous issue involved?

“Ecce positus est hic in ruinam, et in resurrectionem multorum in Israel” (Luc. ii. 34).

Hoc enim omnibus ferè sæculis compertum fuit, pro sacerdotum vitâ benedictionem aut maledictionem a Deo in populum procedere (*Synod. Osnab. an. 1628*).

MATRIMONY.

Are you sufficiently acquainted with all the conditions of the ecclesiastical and civil laws in respect of marriage ?

Do you instruct your people on the sanctity of this holy sacrament and all that is required for worthily receiving it ?

Do you endeavour to induce parties going to get married to prepare themselves by a good confession

some days beforehand, and do you advise them to make a general confession, as is piously recommended in such cases ?

Do you advise them, according to the Roman Ritual, so far as you may see reason, “ ut ante conjugium in eâdem domo non cohabitent, nec etiam simul maneant, nisi aliquibus propinquis vel aliis praesentibus ? ”

Do you endeavour by all means to induce them from the beginning of their marriage-life to enter on the good habit of frequenting the sacraments, of saying their prayers, at least their night prayers, together, of observing well the Sundays and Festivals, of taking all proper care of their domestics, especially as regards their religious obligations, &c. ?

Do you pay strict attention to the laws of the Church with respect to banns, impediments, manner of celebrating marriage, and the proper registration of it ?

Do you try by all possible means to prevent mixed marriages, and, when absolutely you cannot prevent them, do you endeavour to obtain the conditions required by the Church ?

CARE OF THE DEAF AND DUMB, AS ALSO OF PERSONS DEFICIENT IN INTELLECT.

What attention do you pay to these poor objects ?

Do you regard them, on account of their sad condition, as specially entitled to your zeal ?

Have you made yourself acquainted with the special prescriptions of Theology respecting such cases, and the manner of treating them, as regards the various Sacraments ?

Are you aware, that the reason why in most cases these poor objects are so deficient is, because parents and those about them treat them as beings incapable of all religious instruction, and consequently unfit to be admitted to Sacraments, on which account the poor creatures, on their part, are made to resign themselves to this state of privation and exclusion ?

Have you not yourself yielded to the same view with respect to them, and abandoned them therefore to their miserable state, as if having no responsibilities in their regard ?

As regards the Deaf and Dumb especially, have you instructed their parents, that by doing what they can for them in all that concerns religion, in the same way as they teach them other things, they can impart to them a considerable amount of religious knowledge, and train them even to approach the Sacraments ?

Do you feel that, though there were but one such object in the parish, who is passing through life destitute of religious culture, and deprived of the grace of the Sacraments, you shall have on his or her account to confront the terrible sentence, "*Sanguinem ejus de manu tuâ requiram*" (*Ezec. iii. 18*).

Have you in due time, when the object is of proper age, taken steps to have him or her sent to an Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, according to the provisions to that effect of the poor-law ?

Do you look after them as they return from the Institution, to see that they attend to their religious duties ?

What attention do you pay them when sick and dying,

recollecting that in their passage to eternity they have a special claim on your zeal ? *

EXTRAORDINARY AIDS TO BE OCCASIONALLY PROCURED BY
A PARISH PRIEST FOR THE SPIRITUAL WELFARE OF
HIS FLOCK.

Do you procure these aids for your flock, such, for example, as a mission, from time to time ?

Do you allow yourself to forget, what the experience of every day proves to be a fact, that abuses may spring up in a parish, and disorders may have got an inveterate hold of a population, which can be remedied only by the means and resources a mission supplies, and therefore you should be inexcusably wanting to your duty as a Pastor of souls if you neglected providing such a remedy ?

“Quando in aliquâ urbe cernuntur notabilia inconvenientia, quibus Parochus nequit afferre remedium, ipse tenetur omnem curam adhibere ad *missionem* obtinendam. Parochus vero ille, qui rejicit missiones, magnam ingerit suspicionem suae probitatis” (*St. Liguor. Prax. conf. c. 10, § 2.*)

* You are recommended the perusal of a dissertation, entitled “*Claims of the Deaf Mute to be admitted to the Sacraments.*” BROWNE & NOLAN, Nassau-street, Dublin.

This production, which has been accepted by the Bishops of Ireland, and the Vindication of it, addressed specially to their Lordships, treat in large detail of how those poor objects of sympathy are to be dealt with by their parents and their pastors.

RESOLUTIONS TO BE MADE IN A RETREAT

IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN

AN AMENDMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF LIFE AS THE FRUIT
OF THE HOLY EXERCISES.

*Si quis mihi ministrat, me sequatur, et ubi sum ego,
illuc et minister meus erit (Joan. xii. 26).*

Reposita haec spes mea in sinu meo (Job xix. 27).

Already it has been laid down that the great object of a Spiritual Retreat is to realise an amendment and improvement of life, and it has been pointed out that this object is secured, with God's help, by the faithful and persevering observance of the special resolutions which one takes out of his Retreat, and applies to his life and manners thenceforth. There are special instructions recommended by the masters of the spiritual life that deserve the most serious attention on this subject. They are :—

1. That the resolutions be few, not exceeding three or four. A multiplicity of special resolutions shares the fate of a vague general purpose of being better for the future, and has no practical result for any time after the Retreat.
2. But if the resolutions be few, they should be select, by aiming at the failings most in need of amendment, as also at the virtues most required, according to the spiritual exigencies each one has discovered in his own particular case during the Retreat.

The "Imitation of Christ" tells us : "Duo specialiter ad magnam emendationem adjuvant, videlicet, subtrahere se violenter ab eo, ad quod natura vitiouse inclinatur, et

ferventer instare pro eo bono, quo quis amplius indiget.”
(L. 1, c. xxv.)

Every one feels the attacks of the devil, especially by the temptations of a particular vice, or what strives to become a ruling passion, called on that account our predominant passion. If we succeed in subduing this passion, our other temptations are in a great degree overcome along with it. When Goliath fell, the whole army of the Philistines took to flight. Therefore the “Imitation” says : “Si omni anno unum vitium extirparemus, citò viri perfecti efficeremur” (L. i. c. xi.)

3. The resolutions should be committed to writing. “Littera scripta manet.” However, they should be written in so abbreviated a way as to be legible only to the writer, lest by being lost or by any other accident they should fall into other hands. This paper, considering the solemn and sacred circumstances under which it was drawn up, should be looked upon as a life-and-death covenant with the Almighty.

“Considera quod hodiè proposuerim in conspectu tuo vitam et bonum, et e contrario mortem et malum Testes invoco hodie coelum et terram, quod proposuerim vobis vitam et mortem, benedictionem et maledictionem. Elige ergo vitam, ut tu vivas” (Deut. xxx. 15, 19).

4. They should be renewed from time to time, say from festival to festival, as recommended by the “Imitation of Christ.” “Circa principalia festa renovanda sunt bona exercitia, et sanctorum suffragia ferventius imploranda. De festo in festum proponere debemus, quasi tunc de hoc saeculo migraturi simus, et ad aeternum festum per venturi” (L. i. c. 19).

If a person have the good habit of consecrating a day every month to the exercises of a Retreat, it would be an excellent occasion for renewing the resolutions of the annual Retreat. O, that we always kept before our minds our Saviour's warning words, "*qui perseveraverit usque in finm, hic salvus erit.*" (*Matt. x. 22*). This is the grace of graces. It should be the constant object of your prayers, that He, "*who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus.*" (*Philip. i. 6*.)

FIAT, FIAT, FIAT.

A P P E N D I C E S.

APPENDIX I.

WITH the view of suggesting matter for the resolutions an Ecclesiastic should take with him from a Retreat, I have thought well of appending certain admonitions drawn up by St. Charles Borromeo, and proposed to his clergy of the diocese of Milan. They are exceedingly practical, treating briefly, but with great precision and clearness, of the various duties appertaining to the Ecclesiastical State and the Sacred Ministry.

MONITIONES S. CAROLI BORROMAEI AD CLERICOS ET SACERDOTES.

Pervetus illud institutum est tum SS. Patrum usu, tum Ecclesiae auctoritate comprobatum, ut, quae sacerdotalem clericalemque disciplinam, officia ac partes ejus maxime attingunt, ea certis monitionibus comprehensa ab Episcopo Clero proponantur. Cujus instituti ratione atque exemplos adducti, monitiones sequentes edendas censuimus, ut eo diligentius ac religiosius sanctis ecclesiaticae disciplinae vitaeque officiis universus Clerus in omnes sese partes conformet.

1. Primo, fratres et filii in Christo charissimi, memores perpetuò estote vocationis, quâ vos dignatus est Dominus noster. Quâ assidua recordatione memoriaque excitati, eam vos virtutem induite, ut videant alii, quasi lumen aliquod, vestram sanctitatem elucere, quae major inesse debet in vobis, qui mysteriorum Dei ministri, divinaeque gratiae

dispensatores estis. Caelestem in terris vitam tanquam Angeli Dei moribus vestris exprimere studete, ut a vobis divinarum virtutum exempla ad ceteros emanent.

2. Una animi consensione unoque spiritu in iis adlaborate, ut et divino cultui, et caelestium rerum meditationibus, et sacrarum ecclesiasticarumque litterarum studiis vacetis, tum depositis saecularibus vanisque sollicitudinibus, ab omni vitio alieni, in via Domini rectè ambuletis.

3. Charitatem imprimis, quae seminarium est omnium virtutum, omni studio amplectimini. Humilitatem, mansuetudinem, patientiam, justitiam, temperantiam, et officia christiana pietatis reliqua colite. Quaecumque demum sunt vera, pudica, sancta et religiosa, ea cogitate, ea agite; et in Ecclesia quasi in perpetua vestra sacerdotali clericalique statione versamini.

4. Qui Sacerdotes estis, Missae sacrificium facite sanctè, graviter et religiosè. Ad illud faciendum parate vos omni pietate, in tam alti mysterii meditatione toto animo defixi, et quo purius id faciatis, propriam conscientiam diligenter examine discutite, tum singulis saltem hebdomadis, atque adeo saepius, et omnino semper, cum peccati mortalis consciī estis, confiteamini. In ea sanctissimi sacrificii actione ab erroribus vel levissimis omnino cavete. Quae de illo piè et rite celebrando praescripta sunt, studiosè diligentèrque servate.

5. Sanctis precibus praeter cætera supplices, praesertim afflictis rei christiana temporibus, orate Patrem misericordiae et Deum totius consolationis, ut misereatur populi sui: ut fidelium animos ad vitia fugienda, et ad virtutes amplectendas inflammet: ut e principum arimis, si quae sint, evellat discordiae semina.

6. Quidquid vero temporis a divinis officiis, ab ecclesiasticis functionibus, aliisque necessariis actionibus vacuum habetis, non in otio, neque in desidia, neque in rerum

novarum curiositatibus illud conterite, sed cumin sortem Dei vocati sitis, in ejus lege die ac nocte meditamini. Sanctarum litterarum studia diligenter colite, quae usque adeo completi debetis, ut, qui aspernentur, contra eum dicat Dominus: *quia tu scientiam repulisti, et ego repellam te, ne sacerdotio fungaris mihi.*

7. Lectione librorum spiritualium et clericalium pascite animos, mentesque vestras. At libros de rebus jocosis, ridiculis, obscoenis et inanibus procul abjicite. Quotidie aliquid ex SS. Bibliis legite, ac, si licet, aliquid ex SS. Patrum opusculis. Atque alios libros de sacerdotalis clericalisque vitae rationibus et officiis, de animarum cura, de docendi munere, et de aliis ejusdem generis exercitationibus piè confectos legite; et quaecunque ad vitae sanctae normam accommodata sunt, animadvertisite.

8. Provincialium Conciliorum ac diocesanas constitutiones non solum percurrite, sed usque adeo studiosè legite, ut, quae legeritis, mente reputetis, ac videatis simul, utrum quid ex iisdem exequi neglexeritis aut omiseritis.

9. Habitu non exquisito, non delicato nimis, rursus non sordido, non neglecto, sed gravi et decenti tum domi tum foris, pro uniuscujusque vestrum ordinis gradusque ratione, utimini. In incessu, statu, gestu ita vos praebete, ut ab ordinis, quem suscepistis, nomine et ratione nullo sane modo discrepetis.

10. Parcà et frugali mensa contenti sitis, et supellectili etiam modesta ac tenui potius. Ab omni splendido apparatu pompaque saeculari abstинete. In omni vita a fastu, luxu, ambitu, ambitione et a vanitate longe refugite.

11. Nec verbis quidem praescriptum vitae modum pervertite. Nihil scurriliter, nihil jocese, nihil indecorè loquamini. Absint a vobis maledicta, obtrectationes, curiositas, levitas, assentationes et nugae.

12. Temperantiae clericalis disciplinam vobis praescriptam in reliquis etiam omnibus tenete. Commessationes, compositiones, convivia publica evitate. Hospites excipite : at illis excipiendis intra parsimoniae fines vos continete, ita ut clericalis frugalitatis, non sumptuosi convivii testes illos habeatis,

13. Sensus vestros ita dirigite, ut, cum a Deo utiliter dati sint, tanquam rationis ministri, ne eos perperam adhibeatis sicut satellites cupiditatum. Sit igitur vester aspectus simplex et pudicus; aurium sensus castus et prudens; casta mens; casti omnes sensus; vitae et morum consuetudo casta et spiritualis.

14. Saecularibus negotiis, ut est S. Pauli Apostoli documentum, ne vos implicate. A quavis mercatura quaestuosa, omni negotiatione, praediorum conductione, tum aliis prorsus cavete. Nemo potest servire Deo et mammonae, inquit Christus Dominus. Si qui pauperes estis, ne cupiatis divites fieri, ne incidatis in tentationes multas, et in laqueum diaboli.

15. Qui vero uberiores ecclesiasticos redditus habetis, ecclesiastis, e quarum praediis fructus percipitis, praeclaro opere reficite, egregiisque munericibus exornate. Christi visceribus substantiam ecclesiasticam erogate, pauperibus scilicet, peregrinis, viduis, pupillis, aegrotis, quibus esurientibus et egenitibus, cum subvenire possitis, si alimenta necessaria denegatis, violatae charitatis rei estis in conspectu Domini.

16. Parochi praeterea, et ceteri quicunque estis, etiam Praepositi, Archipresbyteri, aliive, qui curam animarum geritis, praeter ea, quae vos cum reliquo Clero communia universe monuimus, illa etiam, quae praecipue de vobis decreta sunt, praestate omni sollicitudine.

17. Imprimis oves vobis concredita cognoscendae sunt, et appellandae nominatim, pascendae et custodiendae. Parochiae vestrae incolarum vitam et mores investigate. Cognoscite publicos peccatores, corruptores aliorum, concubinarios, adulteros, usurarios, blasphemos, et alios qui,

festis diebus non Deo, sed aleis, ludis, choreis serviunt. Illos omnes ab ea male agendi corruptela revocare ac deterrere, omni pietatis officio studete, tum Episcopo etiam, si opus fuerit, significate.

18. Rursus agnoscite etiam pauperes, viduas, pupilos ceterosque aliena ope egentes, quibus et salutari consilio et consolatione et re subvenite, aut si minus potestis, cohortatione alios accendite ad eos sublevandos.

19. Pascite imprimis populum vobis commissum praedicatione Verbi Divini, salutaribus monitis, administratione item sacramentorum, exemplo et oratione. Pueros festis dominicisve diebus in doctrinae rudimentis instruite; prosectoris aetatis homines ad ea intelligenda invitare. Patres matresque familias monete, ut filios et filias, cæterosque domesticos ad statas doctrinae institutiones conducant.

20. Ne omittite, diebus sacris inter Missarum solemnia aliquid ex iis, quae in Missa leguntur, fidelibus exponere, et aliquando sanctiores illius sacramenti ceremoniarum ritumque rationes et significaciones explicare.

21. Docete ac monete, quomodo dies festi colendi et sanctificandi sint: ostendite indignissimum esse sacris illis diebus non modo a nefariis operibus illicitisque negotiis non abstinere, verum etiam religionis ac pietatis opera non praestare omni diligentia.

22. Monete sedulo ac frequentissime patres matresque familias, ut liberos et familiam suam ad pietatis christianarumque virtutum disciplinam religiose instituant, ut de vitae spiritualis ratione libros probatos domi suae habeant, in quorum lectione versentur.

23. Parochiae unicuique vestrum concreditae viciniam cum a vitiis omnibus vos singuli sollicite custodite, tum curate etiam, ne odia, simultates, inimicitiae, fractiones, nec non temere jurandi, maledicendi, imprecandi pravæ consuetudines, ac ne detractiones quidem in ea sint.

24. At vitia imprimis, et peccata, ad quae populum proclivorem esse animadverteritis, reprehendite et expugnate. Nec vero dissimulate peccata, sed annuntiate populo scelera ejus. Idque agite spiritu fortitudinis Domini, et ut strenui ejus milites, bonam militiam militate, nihil inde trepidantes.

25. Rursus non aucupandae hominum gratiae studio id agere desistite: *servus Dei non essem, si hominibus placerem,* ait Apostolus. Vae vobis tacentibus aut dissimulantibus, si grex curae vestrae commissus perierit: sanguinem ejus de manibus vestris requiret justus et omnipotens Deus.

26. Cetera autem officia, quae in sacramentorum administratione, in assidua ad frequentem eorum usum cohortatione, in aegrorum curâ, in aliis parochialis muneric functionibus vobis praescripta sunt, praestate atque exequimini accuratè.

Ipse Deus et Pater noster, et Dominus Jesus Christus dirigat vias vestras in omni sancta obedientia, exhortetur corda vestra, et confirmet in omni opere et sermone bono, ita ut dignè ambuletis vocatione, qua vocati estis, per omnia ei placentes: sicque sanctis vestrarum virtutum progressionibus probati, appareatis ante Deum et Patrem nostrum in adventu Domini nostri Jesu Christi cum omnibus Sanctis ejus.

Amen.

DE SERVANDIS IN STATU CLERICALI.

MONITUM PRIMUM.

Sancti erunt Deo suo, et non polluent nomen ejus; incensum enim Domini et panes Dei sui offerunt, et ideo sancti erunt.
(Levit. xxi. 6.)

Statum clericalem suspice	non ex	Levitate, Avaritia, Ambitione;
	sed	Deo vocante, Perfectione statūs alliciente, Zelo tuae proximique salutis impellente.
Incede in habitu	Gravi,	Indues (eos) sanctis vestibus.
	Modesto,	(Exod. xl. 13.)
Esto Episcopo tuo	Mundo,	Praeceptis, Decretis, Monitis;
	Canonico,	Corde, Verbo, Opere.
Fuge	Obediens in	Domus suspectas—Consortium mulierum— Ludos—Choreas—Theatra—Venationes perstrepentes:
	Contemptus	Episcopum
	Susurrationes	in Superiorem
	Tumultus	Quemcunque
	Viles famulatus ex turpi oeconomia.	
	Avaritiam	Ex munerum acceptione, Ex importunis exactionibus Ex rei alienae administrationibus.

MONITUM SECUNDUM.

Perfectus eris et absque macula. (Deutr. xviii. 13.)

Exemplum eris fidelium in 1 Tim. iv.	Scientia	<div style="display: inline-block; border-left: 1px solid black; padding-left: 10px; margin-bottom: -5px;"> <i>Quia tu scientiam repulisti, repellam te, ne sacerdotio fungaris. (Ose. iv. 6.)</i> </div>
	Prudentia in	<div style="display: inline-block; border-left: 1px solid black; padding-left: 10px; margin-bottom: -5px;"> <i>Dux indigens prudentia multos opprimet. (Prov. xxviii. 16.)</i> </div>
	Modestia et Gravitate in	<div style="display: inline-block; border-left: 1px solid black; padding-left: 10px; margin-bottom: -5px;"> <i>Amictus corporis, et risus dentium, et ingressus hominis enuntiant de illo. (Eccli. xix. 27.)</i> </div>
	Liberalitate erga	<div style="display: inline-block; border-left: 1px solid black; padding-left: 10px; margin-bottom: -5px;"> <i>Quomodo potueris, ita esto misericors. (Tob. iv. 8)</i> </div>
	Temperantia in	<div style="display: inline-block; border-left: 1px solid black; padding-left: 10px; margin-bottom: -5px;"> <i>Attendite, ne graventur corda vestra in crapula et ebrietate, et curis hujus vitae (Luc. xxi. 34).</i> </div>
	Integritate coram	<div style="display: inline-block; border-left: 1px solid black; padding-left: 10px; margin-bottom: -5px;"> <i>Custodi temetipsum et animam tuam sollicitè (Deutr. iv. 9.)</i> </div>
	Obedientia Obsequio Amore erga	<div style="display: inline-block; border-left: 1px solid black; padding-left: 10px; margin-bottom: -5px;"> <i>Qui sequitur me, non ambulat in tenebris. (Joann. viii. 12.) Qui vos audit, me audit: Qui vos spernit, me spernit. (Luc. x. 16.)</i> </div>

MONITUM TERTIUM.

Mundamini, qui fertis vasa Domini. (Isai. lli., 11.)
Sacerdotes induantur justitiam. (Ps. cxxxii.)

Perpende muneris tui	Dignitatem Admirandam potestatem Strictam obligationem studendi	Angelicis humeris formidan- dam, Regia celsitudine excelsio- rem, Omnibus venerabilem. in Corpus et Animam Filii Dei, in remissionem peccatorum, in aereos atque tartareos spiritus.
Per quod factus es		Interpres et legatus Dei, aeterna decreta pro- mulgans.
Cave itaque ne sis	Sacerdos in aeternum, immolans et offerens Filium aeterni Patris in victimam ; Mediator in Deum et homines per oblationem sacrificii pacis precumque fidelium, Dispensator mysteriorum caelestium. Sacerorum contemptor, Summi Pontificis auctoritati parum obsequens, Periculosae aut dubiae doctrinae sectator, Rigidus et asper, aut remissus in poenitentes ; Avarus—Immundus—Impudicus—Violentus —turpis lucri cupidus. (<i>Tim. iii. Tit. i.</i>)	
sed esto	Pius—Innocens—Sobrius — Impollutus—Se- gregatus a peccatoribus—Excelsior Caelis factus. (<i>Hebr. vii.</i>)	

Eritis mihi Sancti, quia sanctus sum et ego Dominus, et separavi vos a cæteris populis, ut essetis mei. (Lev. xx.)

MONITUM QUARTUM.

*Obsecro vos, ut digne ambuletis vocatione, qua vocati estis.
(Ephes. iv.)*

Media	Timor	{ Dei.
	Amor	{ Cordis, Sensuum.
	Custodia	{ Memoriae, Intellectus, Voluntatis.
	Sancta occupatio	{ Collationis cum confessario, Lectionis spiritualis,
	Assidua frequentia	{ Orationis { vocalis, Examinis conscientiae, Sacramentorum.
	Devotio erga	{ Deum, B. Virginem, Sanctos.
	Cautela et moderatio in	{ Negotiis, Conversationibus, Solatiis.
	Fidelitas in	{ Servanda temporis oeconomia, Sanctificandis diebus festis, Obeundis quotidianis pietatis exercitiis

Hoc fac, et vires. (Luc. x. 28.)

APPENDIX II.

QUINQUE PUNCTA A CLERICIS SERIO MEDITANDA.

- 1°. Dignitas Statûs clericalis.
 - 2°. Gravitas offensionis.
 - 3°. Difficultas conversionis.
 - 4°. Severitas punitionis.
 - 5°. Paucitas salvandorum.
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DIGNITAS STATÛS CLERICALIS.

Dei enim sumus adjutores. (*1 Cor. iii., 9.*)

Sic nos existimet homo ut ministros Christi et dispensatores mysteriorum Dei. (*1 Cor. iv., 1.*)

Tu autem, O homo Dei. (*1 Tim. vi., 11.*)

Pro Christo legatione fungimur. (*2 Cor. v., 20.*)

Non vos me elegistis, sed ego elegi vos, et posui vos.
ut eatis, et fructum afferatis, et fructus vester maneat.
(*Joan. xv., 16.*)

Jam non dicam vos servos . . . vos autem dixi
amicos. (*Joan. xv., 15.*)

Ubi sum ego, illic et minister meus erit. (*Joan. xii., 26.*)

Data est mihi omnis potestas in caelo et in terra.
Euntes ergo, docete omnes gentes, baptizantes eos in
nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti, et ecce ego
vobiscum sum omnibus diebus, usque ad consumma-
tionem saeculi. (*Matt. xxviii., 18-20.*)

Accipite Spiritum Sanctum, quorum remiseritis

peccata, remittuntur eis, et quorum retinueritis, retenta sunt. (*Joan.* xx., 22–23.)

Hoc est corpus meum, quod pro vobis datur. Hoc facite in meam commemorationem; similiter et calicem, &c. (*Luc.* xxii., 19–20.)

Pastores gregis Domini. (*Ezec.* xxxiv.)

Super muros tuos Jerusalem constitui custodes. (*Isai.* lxii., 6.)

Vos estis presbyteri in populo Dei, et ex vobis pendet anima illorum. (*Judith* viii., 21.)

Dixi, Dii estis, et filii Excelsi omnes. (*Ps.* lxxxi., 6.)

UNDE SS. PATRES.

Sacerdotium in terris quidem peragit, sed in rerum caelestium classem et ordinem referendum est . . . iis (sacerdotibus) datum est, ut potestatem habeant, quam Deus optimus neque Angelis neque Archangelis datam esse voluit. (*Chrys. Lib.* iii., c. 3, *de sacerd.*)

Sacerdotium est ipso etiam regno venerabilius et majus: ne mihi narres purpuram neque diadema, neque vestes aureas: umbrae sunt ista omnia, vernisque flosculis leviora, &c. Medius stat sacerdos inter Deum et naturam humanam, illinc venientia beneficia ad nos deferens, nostras petitiones illuc perferens, Dominum iratum reconcilians, &c. (*Idem in illud Isaiae (in anno quo mortuus est Rex Ozias; Hom.* v.)

Quanto anima corpore praestantior, tanto est Sacerdotium regno excellentius. (*S. Clem. const. Apost. L.* 2, c. 34).

Omnium quae inter homines expetuntur, velut

extrema meta (sacerdotium). (*Isidorus Pelusiota, Lib. xxi., Epist. 71.*)

Omnium bonorum, quae in hominibus apex. (*S. Ignat. Ant. Epis. ad Smyrn.*)

Prima et nobilissima membrorum Christi Domini pars. (*S. Greg. P. l. xiv., moral, c. 16.*)

Absit ut quidquam sinistrum loquar de iis, qui Christi Corpus sacro ore conficiunt, per quos nos etiam Christiani sumus, qui claves regni coelorum habentes, ante diem judicii judicant. (*S. Hier. Epist. ad Nepot.*)

Ipsi sunt januae civitatis aeternae per quos omnes, qui credunt in Christum, ingrediuntur ad Christum: ipsi janitores, quibus datae sunt claves regni coelorum: ipsi etiam dispensatores regiae domûs. (*S. Prosper ex quo Concil. Paris sub Lud. et Lothar. in praefat.*)

Aurum non pretiosius est plumbo quam regia potestate altior est dignitas sacerdotalis. (*Amb. de dign. sacerd. c. 11, dist. 36.*)

Angelica, imo divina est dignitas. (*de coelest. Hierar. c. 3, S. Dionysius.*)

Excedit omnem cogitationem donum dignitatis sacerdotalis. (*S. Ephrem.*)

O veneranda sacerdotum dignitas! in quorum manibus, velut in utero Virginis, Filius Dei incarnatur. (*S. August. hom. ii. in Ps. xxxvii.*)

Grande mysterium, et magna dignitas sacerdotum, quibus datum est quod angelis non est concessum. (*Imit. Christi. L. iv., c. 5.*)

Si hoc Sanctissimum Sacramentum . . . ab uno tantum consecraretur sacerdote in mundo, quanto putas desiderio . . . ad talem Dei sacerdotem

homines afficerentur, ut Divina Mysteria celebrari videant! (*Imit. Christi, L. iv., 1.*)

Quando sacerdos celebrat, Deum honorat, angelos laetificat, Ecclesiam aedificat, vivos adjuvat, defunctis requiem praestat, et sese omnium bonorum participem efficit. (*Imit. Christi, L. iv., 5.*)

O, quam magnum et honorabile officium sacerdotum quibus datum est Dominum Majestatis verbis sacris consecrare, labiis benedicere, manibus tenere, ore proprio sumere, et caeteris ministrare. (*Imit. Christi, L. iv. c. xi.*)

Virgo benedicta excusa me, quia non loquor contra te, sacerdotem ipse praetulit supra te. (*Bernardin. Tom. i. Serm. 20, Art. 2, c. 7.*)

Licet Beata Virgo excellentior fuit Apostolis, non tamen illi, sed istis Dominus claves regni caelorum commisit. (*Innoc. iii., n. quaedam de Poenitentia.*)

O stupendum miraculum, O potestas inexplicabilis. (*S. Ephrem de sacerd.*)

O sacerdos Dei, si altitudinem coeli contemplaris, altior es; si dominorum sublimitatem, sublimior es; soli Deo, et Creatori tuo inferior es. (*Cassian.*)

Ex his omnibus infer cum S. Ambrosio.

Dignum est, ut dignitas sacerdotalis prius cognoscatur a nobis, deinde servetur a nobis, ut Psalmographi sententia queat repelli a nobis: homo, cum in honore esset, non intellexit, comparatus jumentis insipientibus et similis factus est illis. (*Lib. de dignit. sacerd. c. 2.*)

GRAVITAS OFFENSIONIS.

Gravius peccat, caeteris paribus, clericus in Sacris Ordinibus constitutus . . . quam aliquis religiosus, qui non habet Ordinem Sanctum. (*S. Thomas.*)

Grandis est dignitas sacerdotum, sed grandis ruina eorum si peccent. (*Hieron.*)

Quanto altius ascenderit homo lapsus, tanto altius cadit. Quid altius coelo? De coelo cadit, qui in caelestibus delinquit. (*Pet. Chrys.*)

“Ego dixi dii estis, et filii Excelsi omnes, vos autem sicut homines moriemini, et sicut unus de principibus cadetis.” (*Ps. lxxxii., 6, 7.*) Unde cadetis, et quò? De latere Domini in profundum abyssi. (*S. Bernar.*)

Propter eorum scientiam.

“Si non venissem et locutus fuisse, peccatum non haberent; nunc autem excusationem non habent de peccato suo.” (*Joan. xv., 22.*)

Vos estis lux mundi. (*Matt. v., 14.*)

Labia enim sacerdotis custodient scientiam, et legem requirent ex ore ejus. (*Mal. ii., 7.*)

Juxta S. Thomam, omne peccatum cum scientia patratum, est contra Spiritum Sanctum, et “non remittetur, neque in hoc saeculo, neque in futuro.” (*Matt. xii., 32.*)

Inexcusabilis es, O homo omnis, qui judicas . . . Existimas autem hoc, O homo, qui judicas eos, qui talia agunt, quia tu effugies judicium Dei? (*Rom. ii., 1-3.*)

Peccans in clero peccat in caelo. (*S. Bernard.*)

Quo melius videt, eo gravius peccat. (*S. Greg. P.*)

Non potest se excusare sacerdos dicendo “Pater

dimitte illis, non enim sciunt quid faciunt." (*Luc. xxiii., 34.*)

Scienti legem, et non facienti peccatum est grande. (*S. August.*)

Nulla re magis offenditur, quam cum peccatores sacerdotii dignitate profulgeant. (*S. Chrys.*)

Propter eorum ingratitudinem.

Audite caeli, et auribus percipe terra, quoniam Dominus locutus est; filios enutrivi, et exaltavi: ipsi autem spreverunt me. (*Isai. i., 2.*)

Si inimicus meus maledixisset mihi, sustinuisse utique . . . tu vero homo unanimis, dux meus, et notus meus, qui simul tecum dulces capiebas cibos, in domo Dei ambulavimus cum consensu. (*Ps. liv., 13, 15, 16.*)

Quid feci tibi, aut in quo constristavi te, responde mihi. (*Improperia.*)

Amice, ad quid venisti? (*Matt. xxvi., 50.*)

Juda, osculo filium hominis tradis? (*Luc. xxii., 48.*)

Propter Scandalum.

Super cathedram Moysi sederunt scribae et Pharisei; omnia ergo quaecunque dixerint vobis servate, et facite, secundum opera vero eorum nolite facere; dicunt enim et non faciunt. (*Matt. xxiii., 2, 3.*)

Nomen enim Dei per vos blasphematur inter gentes. (*Rom. ii., 24.*)

Nolite annuntiare in Geth, neque annuntietis in compitis Ascalon ne forte laetentur filiae Philisthiim, ne exultent filiae incircumcisorum. (*ii. Reg. 1, 20.*)

Vae mundo a scandalis . . . vae homini illi per quem scandalum venit. (*Matt. xviii., 7.*)

Qui scandalizaverit unum de pusillis istis qui in me credunt, expedit ei, ut suspendatur mola asinaria in collo ejus et demergatur in profundum maris. (*Ibid. 6.*)

DIFFICULTAS CONVERSIONIS.

Monachus, si ceciderit, orabit pro eo sacerdos ; pro sacerdotis lapsu quis rogaturus est ? quia nempe, teste D. Paulo, ex hominibus assumptus pro hominibus constituitur in iis, quae sunt ad Deum, ut offerat dona et sacrificia pro peccatis. (*S. Hieron.*)

Quis aliquando vidit clericum cito poenitentiam agentem ? Sed etsi deprehensus se humiliaverit, non ideo dolet quia peccavit, sed quia confunditur, quia perdidit gloriam suam. Putasne Deus quasi crudelis poenitentiam denegavit, dicens si sal infatuatum fuerit in quo condietur ? Sed quasi naturalem rem considerans, quia non est qui doceat illum errantem, qui errantes alios corrigebat. (*S. Chrys.*)

Nolim tamen ut clericus dicat major est iniquitas mea, quam ut veniam merear ? Ausim tamen dicere majorem et pertinaciorem iniquitatem esse clerici quam ut communiter ab eo non facta resipiscentia speretur. (*S. Chrys.*)

Impossibile est enim eos qui semel sunt illuminati, gustaverunt etiam donum caeleste, et participes facti sunt Spiritus Sancti, gustaverunt nihilominus bonum Dei verbum, virtutesque saeculi venturi, et prolapsi sunt ; rursus renovari ad poenitentiam. (*Heb. vi., 4, 5.*)

Saecularis homo post peccatum facile ad poenitentiam

venit . . . nihil autem impossibilius quam sacerdotem corrigere, quia omnia scit. (*S. Chrys.*)

Nulla certè in mundo tam crudelis bestia, quam malus sacerdos, nam corrigi se non patitur. (*Hieron.*)

Laici delinquentes facile emendantur, clerici si mali fuerint immendabiles sunt. (*S. Chrys.*)

Ego conspicio paganos, et Iudeos, sed nullos video deteriores quam sacerdotes; sunt ipsi in eodem peccato quo cecidit Lucifer. (*Dominus ad Brigidam.*)

Tales sacerdotes non sunt mei sacerdotes, sed veri proditores. (*idem ad eandem.*)

O, poenitentes non poenitentes, sed illusores. (*S. August.*)

Secundum duritiam tuam et impenitentia cor, thesaurizas tibi iram in die irae, et revelationis justi judicij Dei. (*Rom. ii., 5.*)

SEVERITAS PUNITIONIS.

Non est acceptio personarum apud Deum. (*Rom. ii., 11.*)

Potentes potenter tormenta patientur. (*Sap. vi., 7.*)

Ab altiori fit casus gravior. (*S. Bern.*)

Ruina quae ab alto est graviori casu colliditur. (*S. Ambros.*)

Elevans allisisti me. (*Ps. ci., 11.*)

Quo gratia est cumulatior, et status sublimior, eo casus est gravior, et culpa damnabilior. (*Laurent Justin.*)

Altior mergitur, qui de alto cadit. (*Pet. Bless.*)

Grandis dignitas sacerdotum, sed grandis ruina, si peccent. (*S. Hieron.*)

De caelo cadit, qui in caelestibus delinquit. (*S. Pet. Chrys.*)

Et tu Capharnaum usque ad caelum exaltata, usque ad infernum demergeris (*Luc. x. 15.*)

Prae omnibus diabolis in inferno inferiūs demerguntur. (*S. Brigida.*)

Infernus subter conturbatus est in occursum adventūs tui, suscitavit tibi gigantes. Omnes principes terrae surrexerunt de soliis suis, omnes principes nationum. Universi respondebunt, et dicent tibi; et tu vulneratus es sicut et nos, nostri similis effectus es. Detracta est ad inferos superbia tua, concidit cadaver tuum. Subter te sternetur tinea, et operimentum tuum erunt vermes. Quomodo cecidisti de caelo Lucifer, qui mane oriebaris? (*Isa. xiv. 9, 10, 11, 12.*)

Duplici contritione contere eos. (*Jer. xvii., 18.*)

PAUCITAS SALVANDORUM.

Multi sunt vocati, pauci vero electi (*Matt. xx. 16.*)

Non temere dico, sed ut affectus sum, et sentio; non arbitror inter sacerdotes multos esse, qui salvi fiant, sed multo plures qui pereant. (*S. Chrys.*)

Vidit ille purgatorii poenas, et unum inter caetera demiratus est, quod, cum multi ex omni conditione hominum flammis ultricibus purgarentur, pauci sacerdotes locum inter eos habere viderentur: cuius rei rationem ab angelo doctore sciscitatus, audivit paucos sacerdotes dedi purgantibus flammis, quod fere omnes ex ipsis morientes continuò aut gloria aeterna aut aeterna supplicia manerent. Si quis vero ad locum

purgatorii mitti contigerit, ipsis ocissime transire per ignem, et non in eo diutiùs detineri; quia nempe adeo excelsa est sacerdotis dignitas, ut qui eam pravis actionibus commaculant vix poenitentiae locum coram Deo inveniant, et ideo misere ad inferos aeternū puniendi detruduntur. (*Dionysius Carthusianus de revelatione cuidam Sancto facta.*)

Qui pastorem de medio tulerit, totum gregem dissipabit. (*Chrys.*)

Plus duces quam milites appetuntur in pugna (*S. Cyp.*)

Non quaeret diabolus infideles, et eos qui foris sunt, de Ecclesia Christi rapere festinat.

IMPROPERIA IN SACERDOTES.

Quid feci tibi, aut in quo contristavi te, responde mihi.

Eduxi te de terra Egypti, et tu parasti crucem Salvatori tuo.

Ego te pavi mannâ per desertum, et tu me cecidisti alapis et flagellis.

Quid ultra debui facere tibi, et non feci?

Ego plantavi te vineam electam et speciosissimam, et tu facta es mihi amara nimis.

Ego dedi tibi sceptrum regale, et tu dedisti capiti meo spineam coronam.

Ego te exaltavi, et tu me suspendisti in patibulo crucis.

Memor esto itaque unde excideris, et age poenitentiam, et prima opera fac; sin autem, venio tibi, et movebo candelabrum tuum de loco suo, nisi poenitentiam egeris. (*Apoc.*)

APPENDIX III.

GUIDE TO THE "PROGRAMMES OF SERMONS AND INSTRUCTIONS," POINTING OUT HOW THEY MAY BE ADAPTED TO THE GOSPELS OF THE SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

The "Programmes of Sermons and Instructions" were arranged for consecutive courses of Preaching on the various subjects comprised in the several parts into which they are divided. This arrangement was by no means intended to disparage Homily-preaching as practised so generally in the treatment of the Gospels of the Mass appointed for the Sundays and Holidays in succession, in the order of the Liturgy throughout the year. Each mode has its special merit, and both have been employed by the Church from the beginning.

It appears to us desirable, nevertheless, to adapt the series pursued in the order of the "Programmes" to the Gospels, and thereby render them available for the treatment of the latter in homily-style, according to the example of the Catechism of the Council of Trent in its "*PRAXIS CATECHISMI, SEU CATECHISMUS IN SINGULAS ANNI DOMINICAS DISTRIBUTUS, ET EVANGELIIS ACCOMMODATUS,*" with a view to the same purpose. There will be, however, this difference, that whereas the "Praxis" quotes several texts in each Gospel, and gives several references to different subjects, the following Guide will point out only one subject in each Gospel, whether the

subject be suggested by the general scope of the Gospel, or by several passages, or only by a single text. There are examples in both directions by the holy Fathers, and primitive Homily-Preachers, as we see in the specimens presented in the Divine office; and the practice seems to have been, that when the Lector in his official capacity had read the appointed portion of the Sacred Scriptures, the Bishop addressed the congregation, commenting upon it, or some passages contained in it, and sometimes he might confine himself even to a solitary text.

St. Francis de Sales discusses these various methods in his celebrated letter on Preaching to the Archbishop of Bourges, and giving its due merit to each, he prefers taking a single subject from each Gospel, whether furnished by the Gospel in a general view of it, or by a portion of it, or even by a particular text contained in it. His reasons, as he explains himself, are, that when a Preacher undertakes to deal with a number of passages, suggesting so many distinct subjects, he can merely touch them superficially, and in a desultory way, leaving on the minds of his audience only vague and incoherent views and impressions; whereas confining himself to one subject, he can develop it fully, and inculcate its meaning with all due distinctness and force. Approving of the Saint's reasons, and happy to have so great an authority to rely upon, we shall shape our Guide so as to apply each Gospel to one particular subject, whether availing ourselves of the entire Gospel in a general view of it to that effect, or of a portion of it, or, as it may be, of a single passage; and in using

it the Preacher, after having read the Gospel in the usual way, will link it with the subject indicated by some few prefatory words in the form of an introduction, according to the plan submitted in each of the following examples.

We begin with the first Sunday of Advent, as it is also the first Sunday of the year according to ecclesiastical computation, and we proceed from Sunday to Sunday in consecutive order, reserving the Festivals for the end, and arranging them likewise in the order in which they occur.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

GOSPEL: *Luke xxi. 25-33.*

SUBJECT: THE GENERAL JUDGMENT, OR THE RENEWAL OF THE WORLD AFTER THAT GREAT EVENT.

For the former, see Programme 22, in the series on the Apostles' Creed, as also 37, same series. For the latter, see Programme 38, same series likewise.

If the Particular Judgment has been treated on the previous Sunday, the General Judgment would follow appropriately on this. If, however, the latter subject has been disposed of on the former Sunday, the Renewal of the world might form the subject for the first Sunday of the ecclesiastical year.

INTRODUCTION.

Sunday last was the last Sunday of the ecclesiastical

year, and the Church in her Liturgy very appropriately brought before us the General Judgment, the final event which is to put an end to time, and throw open the unending duration of eternity. This Sunday, which begins a new ecclesiastical year, brings the same thrilling subject before our minds, that once again we may dwell upon it, and impress more deeply upon our souls the thought of an ordeal we all have to go through, and which is to be followed by an eternity of bliss or misery for all the children of Adam. It is with this formidable event impressed upon us, that the Church desires to introduce us into the new year she begins to-day, in order that, according to the exhortation of the Holy Ghost, "*we may in all our works remember our last end, and never sin.*" (*Eccl. vii. 40*). Let us, therefore, give ourselves as dutiful children to her holy guidance, that the reflections we may make upon the awful subject she desires to remind us of, may make their due impression on our hearts, and thereby preserve us from that greatest of all evils, the evil of sin, the only evil we will have to dread, when the Supreme Judge is to come in power and majesty to judge the living and the dead.

N.B.—If the Renewal of the world be selected as the subject, a slight modification made in this Introduction would make it suitable.

If the subject be treated catechetically, see Lesson xxx. in "Exposition of Christian Doctrine" Programmes, vol. ii.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

GOSPEL : *Matt. xi. 2-10.*

SUBJECT : SACRAMENT OF PENANCE. ITS END, EFFICACY,
NECESSITY, OBLIGATION, AND PARTS.

See Programme on the first Instruction on the Sacrament of Penance, Part IV. on the Sacraments, or Exposition of Christian Doctrine, Part V., Lesson xxvii.

INTRODUCTION.

John, who is spoken of in this Gospel, was John the Baptist. He is otherwise called the Precursor or Fore-runner, on account of the office or mission assigned him to go before our Divine Lord, and prepare for Him the way, according to the inspired words of Zachary his father, "*for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways.*" (*Luke i. 76.*) This preparation was to consist in preaching Penance. Hence Penance was the constant subject of his preaching, as he exhorted all who flocked to listen to him, "*to bring forth fruits worthy of Penance, for,*" as he said, "*now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree, therefore, that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the fire.*" (*Luke iii. 8, 9.*) Now the time of Advent is a time of preparation for the coming great solemnity of Christmas. This the word Advent itself denotes, which signifies the coming, or the approach, that is the coming or approach of the Nativity of our Divine Lord, or of the great festival which commemorates His Nativity. Our preparation must be a preparation of Penance in accordance with the preaching of St. John,

and therefore the Church brings before us his mission and preaching during the holy season of Advent, that we may prepare to celebrate worthily the festival we are approaching. But what is to be our Penance ?

Penance for us Christians, as we know, consists in availing ourselves of the Sacrament of Penance by complying with all the conditions necessary to obtain the remission of our sins in that holy Sacrament. Hence the Sacrament of Penance should occupy our thoughts during the holy season of Advent, on which account we will, in God's name, make this the subject of the words I wish to address to you in this day's instruction.

A few words of invocation, after which proceed with the subject, *stating* it to be on the end, efficacy, necessity, and obligation of the Sacrament of Penance.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

GOSPEL : *John i. 19-28.*

SUBJECT : CONTRITION.

See Programme of fourth Instruction on the Sacrament of Penance, Part IV.; as also Lesson xxviii., Part V., Exposition of Christian Doctrine.

INTRODUCTION.

Advent is a time of preparation for the coming great solemnity of Christmas, on which we celebrate the Nativity of our Divine Lord, or His coming into this world. Therefore, the Church, in the Gospel of this day, brings again before her children the mission and preaching of the Precursor John the Baptist, whose

special office it was to prepare mankind for the coming of our Blessed Lord and Saviour amongst them. He was, indeed, thought to be our Saviour Himself, and when he so emphatically declared he was not, it was considered that he might be Elias or a Prophet. This, too, he peremptorily denied, and when he was pressed to tell who he was, he humbly said he was "*the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord;*" and as he was further asked, why he baptized, he said he baptized, indeed, with water, but that there stood in the midst of them one whom they knew not, meaning our Saviour Himself, the latchet of whose shoe he confessed himself not worthy to loose.

As John cried out in the wilderness, calling upon mankind to make straight the way of the Lord, that is, to remove all obstacles and impediments that would obstruct His coming, and as he baptized with water unto penance, so does the Church, during the holy season of Advent, call out to her children to prepare for the spiritual birth of our Divine Lord in their hearts at Christmas, and for this purpose to remove every obstacle that would hinder so great a happiness. Now it is only by doing penance for their sins this is to be effected : and as sin is committed within the soul, it is within the soul likewise that the chief part of penance must be performed by a true and hearty sorrow or contrition for sin. This, then, is to be the subject of our Instruction to-day—the contrition necessary for a good confession, in order to obtain pardon of our sins in the Sacrament of Penance.

Invocation, after which proceed to the subject.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

GOSPEL : *Luke* iii. 1-6.

SUBJECT : PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT.

See Programme, Fifth Instruction on the Sacrament of Penance, Part IV.; as also Lesson xxviii., Part V., Exposition of Christian Doctrine.

INTRODUCTION.

The great Festival is at hand—the Festival of our Divine Lord's Nativity. During this holy season of Advent, the voice of one crying in the wilderness—the voice of the Precursor, has been frequently sounded in our ears exhorting mankind to prepare the way of the Lord by doing penance for their sins. This voice the Church adopts, and makes it her own, to exhort her children to prepare for the worthy celebration of the great solemnity of Christmas. This day's Gospel, in repeating the words of Isaias the Prophet, "*Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths,*" adds moreover from the same Prophet the very significant words, "*Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.*" This is figurative language, and it means simply, that penance, to be true and real, must produce an entire reformation of life and manners, and must therefore, amongst its other conditions, include a purpose of amendment. This, then, is

to be the subject on which we are to entertain ourselves to-day, and we will look into ourselves to see, if, approaching the great solemnity now so near, we are bringing to its celebration a purpose, a determination of sinning no more, and of proving before God and man that our repentance is sincere by the amendment it will realise in our lives and manners.

Invocation, and then proceed with the subject.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS.

GOSPEL: *Luke ii. 33-40.*

SUBJECT: JESUS CHRIST—OUR FAITH IN HIM.

See Programme of thirteenth Discourse on the Apostles' Creed, Part I.; also Lesson iv., Part V., Exposition of Christian Doctrine.

INTRODUCTION.

This Gospel brings before us the scene in the Temple on the occasion of our Divine Saviour's presentation. He was in the arms of His blessed Mother like any other child. But there was a venerable old man in the Temple at the same time, the holy Simeon, to whom God had promised, that before his death he would have the happiness of seeing the Saviour of the world. It also happened that a holy old widow named Anna, then 80 years of age, entered the Temple, who spent almost all her time in it, fasting and praying, and serving God day and night, as the Gospel mentions.

Now, all others who might have been in the Temple at the time saw nothing different in our infant Saviour from any other child. But a Divine revelation made Him known to these holy souls, Simeon and Anna, and they not only believed in Him interiorly, but confessed Him outwardly, and spoke of Him to all *that looked for the redemption of Israel*. Now the object of the Church in bringing before our minds this most interesting passage in the infancy of our Divine Lord is to invite us to approach Him as He lies in the crib of Bethlehem, that with the eyes of Faith we may acknowledge and confess Him as true God and true man, under the poor and humble appearance in which He presents Himself to us in His Nativity. Let us therefore approach our infant God, and as, according to the words of the Apostle, *with the heart we believe unto justice; but, with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation* (*Rom. x. 10*), let us believe in Him and confess that belief according to the teaching of our holy Mother the Church, "*The pillar and ground of truth.*" (*1 Tim. iii. 15*.)
Invocation, after which proceed to the subject.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

GOSPEL : *Luke ii. 42-52.*

SUBJECT : DUTIES OF CHILDREN TO PARENTS.

See Programme—First Discourse on the Fourth Commandment, Part II. The Commandments of God; also Exposition of Christian Doctrine, Part V., Lesson xvii.

INTRODUCTION.

This Gospel tells us of how our Divine Lord, when 12 years of age, went up to Jerusalem in company with Mary, His Immaculate Mother, and His foster-father Joseph, and how He remained after them when they had left to return home, and how they, after a three days' search, found Him in the Temple in the midst of the Doctors of the Law, hearing them and asking them questions. When Mary lovingly complained to Him of His having acted in the manner He did, He explained that He had remained on the business of His Eternal Father, and then giving Himself up to her and her holy spouse Joseph, *He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, and advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men.*

“*He was subject to them.*” These are most extraordinary words. He who was God from the beginning, by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made, of the things that were made, is subject to His own creatures, as a child to his parents, and, what is still more wonderful, this is all the Scripture tells us of Him thenceforth for 18 years—that is, till the thirtieth year of His age, when He entered on His public Ministry. He was subject to them all this time, as a dutiful Son to His parents. What an example! and with this example before us, what subject can be more appropriate for us to dwell upon than the duties which children owe to their parents, according not only to the positive Law of God, but according also to the dictates of the natural law itself.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

GOSPEL : *Luke ii. 21.*

SUBJECT : BAPTISM.

See Programme, Instruction on Baptism, Part IV., On the Sacraments ; as also Lesson xxiv., Exposition of Christian Doctrine, Part V.

INTRODUCTION.

This Gospel tells us of the Circumcision of our Divine Lord. Circumcision in the Old Law foreshadowed Baptism in the New. It was in performing the ceremony of Circumcision a name was given to the newly-born child. So also is it in Baptism that the Christian child receives its name. Circumcision was the sign or seal of the covenant between God and the Jewish people, instituted by God Himself with the Patriarch Abraham. Baptism is the great Christian covenant whereby we are made children of God, brethren of Jesus Christ, and co-heirs with Him to the kingdom of heaven. Circumcision was the remedy for Original Sin in the Old Law ; so is Baptism in the New Law. Therefore, the mystery of our Divine Saviour's Circumcision should dispose us to think of our own Baptism, the consideration of which presents several points of most salutary instruction. Let us therefore raise our thoughts on high, and beg of God to enlighten us on a subject so intimately bound up with our salvation ; and let us also ask of the Saint whose name we bear, to obtain for us the grace of walking in his foot-

steps, according to his blessed example, during his mortal life here upon earth.

Proceed to the subject.

SAME SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

GOSPEL : *John ii. 1-11.*

SUBJECT : MATRIMONY.

See Programme on the subject, Part IV., On the Sacraments ; as also Lesson xxix., Exposition of Christian Doctrine, Part V.

INTRODUCTION.

This Gospel gives us an account of a Marriage at which our Blessed Lord and His Immaculate Mother assisted. Marriage is the great hinge of life for better or worse, involving the alternative in so many cases of happiness or misery, not only for this life but for the life to come. The Catechism asks a question with which we are all familiar, "What is the reason so many marriages prove unhappy ?" and we know the answer. It is, "Because many enter into that holy state from unworthy motives and with guilty consciences, therefore their marriages are not blessed by God." It is therefore of the highest importance that Christians should be thoroughly acquainted with what our holy religion teaches on a subject fraught with consequences so decisive for good or evil, not only as regards their temporal interests, but also the interests of their immortal souls.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

GOSPEL: *Matt. viii. 1-13.*

SUBJECT: DUTIES OF MASTERS AND MISTRESSES AND PERSONS IN AUTHORITY TOWARDS SERVANTS AND THOSE UNDER THEM.

See Programme on this subject, the Fourth on the Fourth Commandment, Part II., The Commandments of God; also Lesson xvii., Part V., Exposition of Christian Doctrine.

INTRODUCTION.

This Gospel gives an account of two miracles performed by our Divine Lord, which display in a wonderful way His power and goodness in the instantaneous cure of a man afflicted with leprosy, and the cure of the centurion's servant. The solicitude of the centurion for his servant went far to induce our merciful Saviour to comply with his request. O, that all masters and mistresses and persons in authority were equally solicitous for the welfare, spiritual and temporal, of their servants and those under their charge. Let us, therefore, in God's name, take occasion from the example of this good man to make some reflections on this great branch of Christian duty—the obligations of masters, mistresses, and all persons in authority towards their servants and those under them.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

GOSPEL : *Matt. viii. 28-27.*

SUBJECT : FAITH.

See Programme of First Discourse on First Commandment, Part II. The Commandments of God; also Lesson xiv., Exposition of Christian Doctrine.

INTRODUCTION.

“*Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?*” These words of our Divine Lord present to us a most salutary subject of instruction—the subject of Divine Faith. O, if we believed as we ought, with a firm unreserved Faith based upon God’s eternal veracity, and the authority of His Church, which is “*the pillar and ground of truth,*” doubtless we would lead better lives and walk in a manner more worthy of our vocation as Christians and “*domestics of the Faith.*” Let us therefore lift our hearts to God, begging of Him beforehand, that He will vouchsafe to us His grace to understand well all that concerns our spiritual welfare in a virtue so precious in His sight and so necessary for our guidance and support in the pilgrimage of this world.

Proceed to the subject.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

GOSPEL : *Matt. xiii. 24-30.*

SUBJECT : ETERNITY.

See Programme of Forty-second Discourse, the fifth on the Twelfth Article of the Apostles’ Creed, Part I.

INTRODUCTION.

In the Parable of this Gospel mankind are compared to good seed a man has sown in his field and cockle seed sown stealthily in the same field by an enemy. Both sprout up together, the good seed sending forth its stem, and the cockle its stem likewise, which was a kind of noxious weed. The servants suggested to the master to have the cockle pulled up, but the master said : "No, but let both grow together, and the reapers will separate them in making the harvest." Just so, good men and bad men live on together in this life, God so permitting; but the harvest is to come, the end of the world, when, by the ministry of His angels, the Supreme Judge will separate them, placing the good on the right for eternal happiness in heaven, and the bad on the left for eternal misery in hell. O, eternity ! What a word ! and eternity in heaven or in hell, what a thought ! And to bring this thought more home to ourselves, will there not be a separation amongst us here present, some of us, let us hope, to find ourselves on the right, whilst others, fearful to think, shall find themselves on the left amongst the children of everlasting perdition !

O, if we had this thought of eternity always before our minds, how could we remain in sin ? Let us, therefore, think on it in time, for when it comes, our lot shall have been decided ; for on whatever side the tree falls, whether to the south or the north, there must it remain for ever and ever.

Invocation, after which proceed to the subject.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

GOSPEL: *Matt. xiii. 31-35.*

SUBJECT: SCANDAL.

See Programme on the subject, Fourth Discourse on the Fifth Commandment, Part II.

INTRODUCTION.

This Gospel contains two Parables—one, that of the mustard seed, and the other, that of leaven used in leavening bread. These Parables are susceptible of various interpretations, for the word of God abounds in significance, and serves for our instruction in its various meanings and acceptations. The mustard seed imparts its pungency to whatever matter it may be mixed in, and the leaven also imparts its savour to the dough, in which it is put for baking. So men are mixed with men, and, as they are good or bad, they impart an influence for good or evil to those amongst whom they live. But, unfortunately, we are more easily depraved by our mixing with bad men than we are led to virtue by those who are good and virtuous. Hence the great importance of being on our guard against bad example, or, in other words, against Scandal, the sin committed, when by his conduct, in acts or words, one man leads another into sin, “*Woe to that man by whom scandal cometh,*” says our Divine Lord (*Matt. xviii. 7.*) O, that we had this maxim engraven on our hearts! How many sins would be prevented amongst mankind of

every age, but especially amongst the young. Let us, therefore, give our best attention to so important a subject, that with God's grace we may escape the woes pronounced by our Blessed Lord against the scandal-giver.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

GOSPEL : *Matt. xx. 1-16.*

SUBJECT : A HAPPY DEATH.

See Programme on the subject, the Thirty-sixth Discourse on the Apostles' Creed, Part I.

INTRODUCTION.

The Parable of this day's Gospel is highly instructive. In its interpretation, God is the householder, and we are labourers, labouring in this life for a reward to be given us in the next. The vineyard is the service of God in its widest sense, and the several hours of the day signify various periods in the course of our mortal life. God calls us into His service in the early dawn of life. If we do not comply, He calls us again and again, adding sometimes promises, other times reproaches and expostulations ; nor does He desist even to the eleventh hour, or the close of our days in this world. Now we should look to the end we have before us as the great motive we have of giving ourselves to God to love and serve Him, the end awaiting us all, the death we have to undergo, and which is to put an end to our toil and

labour here below ; and, if a happy death, is to earn for us the blissful sentence, “ *Well done, good and faithful servant ; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*” (Matt. xxv. 23.) O how we should desire such a death ! how we should labour for it, and labour during our entire lives. To excite this desire, and to sustain us in this labour, we will, in God’s holy name, make some reflections on the subject of a happy death, in the hope of the reward to which it is the passage, as we will have to bid farewell to all things here below.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

GOSPEL : Luke viii. 4-15.

SUBJECT : SPIRITUAL READING.

See Programme on the subject, Part III.

INTRODUCTION.

The Parable of this Gospel is very instructive. The sower is Almighty God Himself. The seed He sows is His own Divine Word, as our Blessed Lord explains. The various kinds of soil on which it is sown denote the various dispositions of those who receive God’s word, on account of which it produces no fruit in some, whilst in others it produces fruit a hundred-fold. Now God’s Word is communicated to us in different ways, one of which, and a very ordinary one, is the reading of pious books or pious reading. This is a most important subject, on which we shall find it profitable to bestow

some considerations. Let me, therefore, beg your earnest attention, and let us lift up our hearts to the Almighty, whose Word we are going to speak of, &c. &c.

Proceed to the subject.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

GOSPEL: *Luke xviii. 31-43.*

SUBJECT: CONDITIONS OF PRAYER.

See Programme on the subject, the Third on Prayer, Part III.

INTRODUCTION.

This Gospel gives an account of a remarkable miracle our Divine Saviour performed on a blind man by restoring his sight. This great mercy He bestowed upon this poor man was owing in a great measure to the earnestness and perseverance with which he sought it. Prayer, as St. Augustine teaches, is the key of heaven, by which we unlock to ourselves the Divine treasures. But it is not enough to pray in any sort of way; we must accompany our prayers with certain conditions, in order that they may meet acceptance at the throne of grace. How important therefore, is it not, that we should thoroughly understand these conditions, in order that when we pray we may be favourably heard in the Court of Heaven. The conditions of prayer will, consequently, form the subject of our instruction, and as we enter upon it, let us beg of the Father of Lights, from whom *every best gift and every perfect gift descends*, to enlighten us, &c. &c.

Proceed to the subject.

ASH-WEDNESDAY.

GOSPEL : *Matt. vi. 16-21.*

SUBJECT : DEATH.

See Programme on the subject, the Thirty-fourth Discourse on the Apostles' Creed, Part I.

INTRODUCTION.

We enter upon the holy and penitential season of Lent to-day, and the Gospel of the Mass brings before our minds that fasting and abstinence are to constitute the chief part of our penitential observances. The Church desires to urge these observances upon us by reminding us of our departure out of this world, as she says to us, in putting ashes on our heads or foreheads, "*Remember, man, that dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return.*" We will, therefore, conform ourselves with the wishes of the Church in entertaining ourselves with this momentous subject, recollecting the words of the Holy Ghost, "*In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.*" (*Eccl. vii. 40.*)

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT.

GOSPEL : *Matt. iv. 1-11.*

SUBJECT : FASTING AND ABSTINENCE.

See Programme on the Second Precept of the Church, Part II.

INTRODUCTION.

Our Divine Saviour presents Himself to us in this day's Gospel as our example in complying with the obligation of fasting and abstinence required by the holy ordinance of Lent. He was pleased to fast forty days ; hence forty days is the period, likewise, of our Lenten fast. It is, therefore, in accordance with His Divine example, and the law of the Church, that we should be thoroughly acquainted with the obligation and condition of fasting and abstaining, in order to pass this holy time in a manner pleasing to God and salutary to our own souls. Let us, however, begin by invoking the Divine blessing, &c. &c.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT.

GOSPEL : *Matt. xvii. 1-9.*

SUBJECT : HEAVEN.

See Programme on the subject, the Fortieth Discourse on the Apostles' Creed, Part I.

INTRODUCTION.

This Gospel tells us of what is called the Transfiguration of our Divine Lord. He was graciously pleased in this mystery to afford His three Apostles—Peter, James, and John—a view of Himself, encompassed with that brightness and glory which were due to His sacred humanity, but which He concealed from

the eyes of men, because it was too much for mortal eyes to behold so transporting a spectacle. Even beholding it for a moment, the Apostles swooned away, and when they recovered themselves, not knowing what to say, Peter gave vent to his sensations by saying, "*Lord, it is good for us to be here. If Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias.*" In this manifestation of Himself our Blessed Lord gave the Apostles to behold a glimpse of the glory awaiting them in heaven, the glory encompassing His sacred Humanity at the right hand of the Father—a glory so enchanting, that St. Augustine said, that he would be ready to go through the torments of hell, if necessary, in order to behold it. The mystery therefore of this day's Gospel lifts up our minds to our heavenly country, to contemplate the happiness that awaits us, if, true to our own best interests, we walk in the narrow path that conducts to so happy a destination. O, what should we not do and suffer to merit so great a happiness; and if our poor human nature murmur against the fasting and austeries of this holy time, let us encourage ourselves by what the Apostle tells us, "*That the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.*" (*Rom. viii. 18.*)

O, heaven! O, the happiness of heaven! O, heavenly glory! What a subject to think of. On entering upon it, let us beg of God to assist us by His Divine grace, &c., &c.

Proceed to the subject.

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT.

GOSPEL: *Luke xi. 14-28.*

SUBJECT: THE FALLEN ANGELS.

See Programme on the subject, Sixth Discourse on the First Article of the Apostles' Creed, Part I.

INTRODUCTION.

This Gospel gives us a view into a world, where the eyes of our body see nothing, but where the eyes of our soul, enlightened by faith, have much to behold. It is the spiritual world, a world as real as the material world which we see around us: In this spiritual world we have to fight the battle of our salvation against the powers of hell, and we see in this day's Gospel what forces Satan has at his command to accomplish our eternal ruin, if he can. What a subject to think on! How important and thrilling! Our happiness or misery for all eternity is bound up with it. Let us therefore beg of God to open the eyes of our soul and to shed upon them the light of His Divine countenance, that seeing the enemies we have to fight against on our way through this life, we may arm ourselves for the conflict, and fight the good fight in view of the crown of immortal glory that will reward our victory.

Proceed to the subject.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT.

GOSPEL : *John vi. 1-15.*

SUBJECT : PASCHAL COMMUNION.

See Programme on the Fourth Precept of the Church, Part II., as also the Fifth Instruction on the Blessed Eucharist, Part IV., and Exposition of Christian Doctrine, Lesson xxvii., Part V.

INTRODUCTION.

The extraordinary miracle of this day's Gospel, whereby our Divine Lord feeds five thousand men with five barley loaves and two fishes, is a figure of that still more wonderful miracle whereby He feeds the whole world with His own most Sacred Body and Blood in the adorable Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist. Easter is near, and the Precept of Easter Communion is soon to call upon all the children of the Church to approach the Holy Communion. What subject should be more precious for us to entertain ourselves with than this great Christian duty ? Let us therefore give ourselves to our Blessed Lord that He may enlighten us by His grace from above in our duty towards Him in this endearing mystery of His love for mankind, &c.

Proceed to the subject.

PASSION SUNDAY.

GOSPEL : *John viii. 46-59.*

SUBJECT : IMMEDIATE PREPARATION, MANNER OF RECEIVING THE HOLY COMMUNION AND THANKSGIVING AFTER.

See Programme of Sixth Instruction on the Blessed Eucharist, Part IV.; also Exposition of Christian Doctrine, Lesson xxvii., Part V.

INTRODUCTION.

We see in this day's Gospel how our Blessed Lord being near His Sacred Passion was contradicted, and persecuted, and outraged by the Jews, so that He withdrew from the Temple and hid Himself from their violence. In memory of this the Church shrouds her altars, and sacred pictures, and other emblems, thereby hiding them from view. But we are to consider another concealment of Our Divine Lord during this holy time—a concealment in which, according to the expression of Isaias, "*He is truly a hidden God*" (*Isa. xlvi. 15*), where the eyes of flesh cannot discover Him, but where He discovers Himself to the eyes of Faith—the concealment of the outward appearances of bread and wine, under which appearances He desires to be approached, especially in fulfilment of the great Precept of Paschal Communion. It should, therefore, be the study of all true Christians, how they are to comply with this most important duty. We will, therefore, consider, in what we are going to say, how we should approach our Divine Lord in this mystery of His love, how we are to receive

Him, and how, after having received Him, we are to prove ourselves grateful by suitable acts of thanksgiving for so great a gift on the part of God towards us vile worms of the earth.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

PALM SUNDAY.

GOSPEL : *Matt. xxvi.-xxvii.*

SUBJECT : DEVOTION TO THE PASSION OF OUR LORD
JESUS CHRIST.

See Programme on the subject, Part III.

INTRODUCTION.

This is a week of sadness and mourning. We lament this week the death, not of a father or a mother, but of one who loved us more than father and mother, who, not by necessity or constraint, but by the promptings of His spontaneous love, laid down His life and spilt His blood to the last drop on our account. As we look with a steady gaze during this week upon the crucifix, does it not say to us, "*Greater love than this no man hath, that a man should lay down his life for his friends*" (*John xv. 13*). O, it says infinitely more—it says to us, that whereas being sinners, we were His enemies, and His justice called aloud for our punishment, our loving Saviour, nevertheless, offered Himself for us a Victim of Propitiation to make satisfaction for our offences. Will we not therefore spend this week in deep sympathy with our

suffering Saviour, and lay up in our inmost soul an abiding and ceaseless devotion to his Sacred Passion?

Let us beg of God to pour down from on high His blessing on the reflections we are going to make with a view to this blessed result.

Proceed to the subject.

GOOD FRIDAY.

*See Eighteenth Discourse on the Apostles' Creed,
Part I.*

EASTER SUNDAY.

*See Nineteenth Discourse on the Apostles' Creed,
Part I.*

LOW SUNDAY.

GOSPEL: *John xx. 19-31.*

SUBJECT: JUSTIFICATION, OR WHAT IS EFFECTED IN THE SOUL BY BAPTISM AND PENANCE.

*See Ninth Instruction on the Sacrament of Penance,
Part IV.*

INTRODUCTION.

This Gospel, amongst other most interesting particulars, presents to us an account of the concession by our Divine Lord of the extraordinary power He was mercifully pleased to grant to His Church of forgiving sin and restoring sinners to the grace and friendship of

God. This is a wonderful transition, indeed—a transition which is regarded with joy from the heights of heaven; for our Divine Lord assures us that “*there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance*” (*Luke xv. 7*). This transition is also and for every reason a subject of joy and gladness here on earth, and we can never thank God sufficiently for His mercy and goodness to mankind in instituting a means, by which the sinner can accomplish such a transition. This day is called “Dominica in Albis,” that is “Sunday in Whites,” on account of the white dress worn anciently in the Church by persons baptized on Easter Saturday, as emblematic of the purity of soul acquired by the Sacrament. They wore the dress the whole of Easter week, and laid it aside on the following, that is on this Sunday. This observance, as we recall it, together with the words of our Blessed Lord, whereby He granted to His Church the power of forgiving sins, brings naturally before our minds the whole subject of justification, or, in other words, the change that takes place in the soul as it passes from a state of sin to a state of grace. Let us beg of God to give us the grace we stand in need of in the reflections we are going to make, that we understand, as far as it is given to the human mind to understand, a subject so intimately bound up with our eternal welfare, &c., &c.

Proceed to the subject.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

GOSPEL : *John* x. 11-16.

SUBJECT : THE HAPPINESS OF BELONGING TO THE TRUE CHURCH.

See Programme of the Thirty-second Discourse on the Apostles' Creed, Part I.

INTRODUCTION.

In this Gospel our Divine Saviour speaks of Himself as the good Shepherd. He also speaks of His sheep. He says of Himself that He knows His sheep, and that they know Him, and that He lays down His life for His sheep. He adds that He has other sheep that are not of His fold, but that He is to bring them into it, so that there be but one fold and one Pastor. Under this figurative language our Divine Lord would convey to us that the Church is like a sheepfold, that the faithful are like sheep under Him as their Supreme Pastor, and that there was to be but one fold, that is, but one Church, to which all true Christians should belong, and out of which there was to be no salvation.

What a happiness to belong to this one true Church under Jesus Christ, as its Supreme Head; and what thanks do we owe to the Almighty for this happiness? We will, in God's name, bestow some reflections on this subject, and in order that we may do so with advantage, let us lift up our minds on high, and beg of our good Shepherd, &c., &c.

Proceed to the subject.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

GOSPEL: *John xvi. 16-22.*

SUBJECT: THE CHURCH, HER PROPERTIES AND
DISTINCTIVE NOTES OR MARKS.

*See Programme of the Twenty-eighth Discourse on
the Apostles' Creed, Part I.*

INTRODUCTION.

In the Gospel you have heard read our Divine Lord seeks to prepare His Apostles and Disciples for the withdrawal of His visible presence from amongst them.

After He had risen from the dead, He still remained on earth for forty days. During this time He frequently appeared to His Apostles, and instructed them as to how they were to carry out the great commission He had confided to them of extending throughout the world the Church, “*which,*” according to the words of St. Paul, “*He hath purchased with His own blood*” (*Acts xx. 28*). He told them that in a short time they were not to see Him, and in a short time they were to see Him again, and their hearts were to rejoice, and their joy no one was to take away from them. In effect He is always with His Church, according to His own most gracious assurance, “*Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world*” (*Matt. xxviii., 20*), aiding her in her Divine Mission amongst mankind. He was pleased to make His Church conspicuous to the whole world, like a city placed on a mountain, according

to His own description of her. This He did by the properties with which He invested her, and the notes or marks he impressed upon her. He foresaw that heresies would arise in course of time, and cause confusion in the world, all and each of them claiming to be His true church; and, therefore, He gave to mankind the means of discerning and recognising amongst these heretical sects the Church—the one true Church—He Himself had instituted. These means consist in the properties, as I have said, He invested her with, and the notes or marks He set upon her. It should be therefore very interesting to take account of these properties and notes, and I am sure I need hardly ask your patient attention, as I shall endeavour to lay them before you.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

GOSPEL : *John xvi. 5-14.*

SUBJECT : THE HOLY GHOST.

See Programme of Twenty-third Discourse on the Apostles' Creed, Part I.

INTRODUCTION.

Our Divine Lord, foreseeing the sorrow and grief His Apostles and Disciples should feel on His departure from amongst them, consoled them beforehand by telling them He would send them the Holy Ghost, whom He

termed the Paraclete, that is the comforter, or consoler. He was to send Him not only on their account, in their mortal day, but on our account, at this distance of time, and on account also of all mankind to the end of time, for our Blessed Saviour said, that coming, this Divine Person would remain for ever. (*John xiv. 16.*) We will therefore entertain ourselves in considering what our holy Faith teaches us respecting Him, and, in order that we may do so with the greater spiritual profit, let us, &c.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

GOSPEL: *John xvi. 23–30.*

SUBJECT: EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

See Programme on the subject, Part III.; also Lesson xxii., Exposition of Christian Doctrine, Part V.

INTRODUCTION.

In this Gospel our Divine Lord speaks very encouragingly of Prayer, and His words are in accordance with what we find laid down in various passages of the Holy Scriptures, and attested by the most remarkable facts respecting the power and efficacy of prayer. Let us, therefore, in God's name, bestow some reflections on the subject. It is vitally interesting to us, involving, as it does, our dearest interests, spiritual and temporal, for this world, and still more for the world to come.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

GOSPEL : *John xv. 26-27, xvi. 1-4.*

SUBJECT : THE HOLY GHOST AUTHOR OF OUR
SANCTIFICATION.

See Programme of the Twenty-fifth Discourse on the Apostles' Creed, Part I.

INTRODUCTION.

Our Divine Lord before His Ascension frequently spoke of the Holy Ghost to His Apostles and Disciples, and promised to send Him to them for their consolation, and to confirm them in the knowledge of the truths He Himself had taught them. He was true to His promise, and we are within eight days of the festival which commemorates this great event. On this account the Church desires, that we should duly prepare ourselves for its worthy celebration, and she accordingly brings before us our Blessed Saviour's words, in which He spoke to His disciples beforehand of the mission of the Holy Ghost. His mission was manifold, but He came especially for the sanctification of our souls, so that, as the Eternal Father created us for heaven, and as the Eternal Son redeemed us after we had forfeited, in the sin of our first parents, our right to that blessed kingdom, so the Holy Ghost vouchsafed to sanctify us, and thereby share with the other two Divine Persons in the great work of our salvation.

Our Blessed Lord desired His Apostles and Disciples to prepare beforehand by retirement and prayer for the coming of the Divine Spirit, and the Church desires also, that we should prepare ourselves to celebrate the festival recalling so great a mystery, in order that we may largely participate in the fruits of sanctification to be reaped from its worthy celebration. Let us, therefore, dispose ourselves with this view to consider the mission of the Holy Ghost as the sanctifier of our souls ; and, that we may the better do so, let us invoke His Divine assistance, saying, “ Come, O Holy Ghost,” &c.

Proceed to the subject.

WHITSUNDAY.

GOSPEL : *John* xiv. 23-31.

SUBJECT : THE HOLY GHOST. HIS MISSION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH.

See Programme of Twenty-fourth Discourse on the Apostles' Creed, Part I.

INTRODUCTION.

On this Sunday, commonly called Whitsunday, we celebrate the Descent of the Holy Ghost. Our Divine Lord, before His Ascension, had frequently promised His Apostles and Disciples, that He would send this Divine Spirit to them, and on Sunday, the tenth day after He had ascended from the top of Mount Olivet in their presence, He fulfils His promise in the great

event of this day's celebration. Amongst the various purposes for which the Holy Ghost descended on earth, a principal one was to aid the Apostles in the establishment of the Church, and, thenceafter, to preside over her in directing and ruling her to the end of time. How beneficent this mission, and how salutary to mankind ! We will, in God's name, take it as the subject of the reflections we desire to make on this day, which is so precious to the Church on account of the great mystery it solemnizes ; and in order to derive greater advantage from what we are going to say, let us invoke the aid of the Holy Ghost Himself, to enlighten us and guide us by His Divine Grace.

Proceed with the subject.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

GOSPEL : *Matt. xxviii. 18-20.*

SUBJECT : THE MOST HOLY TRINITY.

See Programme of Ninth Discourse on the first Article of the Apostles' Creed, Part I.

INTRODUCTION.

This Sunday, the first Sunday after Pentecost, the Church calls Trinity Sunday. In the Apostles' Creed we express our belief in Three Divine Persons--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ; and we further hold as of Divine Faith that, though these three Divine Persons are really distinct, and each of them God, nevertheless there is but one God. This is a funda-

mental mystery of the Christian Religion, which the Church desires to keep prominently before the minds of her children, and for the celebration of which she has appointed a special Sunday, this first Sunday after Pentecost. We will therefore enter into the views of our holy Mother the Church, and try to make some reflections on this mystery, which is hidden in God, and which we are required to believe and profess on the authority of His unerring Word.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL : *Luke xiv. 16-24.*

SUBJECT : THE SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL.

See Programme on the subject, Part IV.; also Lesson xxiv., Exposition of Christian Doctrine.

INTRODUCTION.

The Parable of this Gospel speaks of a great supper a certain man made. He invited many guests, but for various reasons they declined his invitation, whereupon he sent his servants out into the highways and hedges to invite whomsoever they might meet and to compel them to come into the supper. To understand the instruction contained in this Parable, we are to consider, in the first place, the man mentioned as preparing a great supper, to represent our Divine Lord. In the second place, we are to consider the supper to be the Sacraments He has instituted for the nourishment of

our souls. In the next place, the guests invited mean the faithful at large, many of whom, engaged in the pursuit of honours, riches, and pleasures, yield to these temptations, and refuse accepting the invitation. These temptations exist everywhere, and at all times, and that we may not yield to them, we will consider how precious is the food that our Divine Lord has prepared for us in the Sacraments; and we shall see, with God's blessing, how we should be traitors to our own souls, if we allowed ourselves to be held back by any temptation, from partaking of the spiritual food provided for us in these Divine Institutions.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL : *Luke xv. 1-10.*

SUBJECT : FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

See Programme of Thirty-third Discourse on the Apostles' Creed, Part I., as also Fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer, Part III.

INTRODUCTION.

This Gospel puts before us two Parables, one is that of the strayed sheep. The shepherd has ninety-nine yet in the fold, but he is so concerned about the one that has gone astray, that he goes in search of it, and when he finds it, he puts it on his shoulders, rejoicing, and so takes it back to the fold ; and desirous that others would take part in his joy, he calls all his neigh-

bours together, and tells them how glad he is to have found the sheep that had gone astray. The other Parable is that of a woman having ten groats, and losing one of them, she is so troubled about it, that she searches the whole house for it, and when she finds it, she tells all her neighbours of it, showing her joy for having found it.

Our Blessed Lord in applying these two Parables, would wish us to understand, that as the shepherd sought after the lost sheep, and the woman searched after the groat she had lost, and both rejoiced and called their neighbours about them to take part in their joy as they succeeded in their search, so there is joy in heaven amongst the angels upon one sinner doing penance, more than on account of ninety-nine that need not penance. Who could believe in this if we had not God's own Word for it; and is it not to recover poor sinners from their strayings in the ways of sin, that He has left to His Church the power of the remission or forgiveness of sins, which forms a distinct article of our Faith, which we profess every time we recite the Apostles' Creed? Let us, then, with thankful hearts, entertain ourselves for some minutes in dwelling on this great mercy of God to poor sinful man, that taking advantage of it, we may find pardon for our sins, whenever we have the misfortune of offending our ever merciful God.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL: *Luke v. 1-11.*

SUBJECT: THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD IN GENERAL.

See Programmes of Introductory and concluding Discourses on the Commandments of God, Part II.

INTRODUCTION.

This Gospel tells us how Peter had been out at sea fishing the whole night, but had taken nothing, and how, having let down his net at the bidding of our Divine Lord, he had, all at once, so large a take of fish, as to fill two boats, his own and another, and to fill them so as almost to sink them in the waves. This miracle of our Divine Lord is highly instructive. It points out to us, on one side, how, labouring night and day, we labour in vain, unless we have the Divine blessing on our work, according to the express words of our Saviour, who says, "*without Me you can do nothing.*" (*John xv. 5.*) It points out to us in another direction, how we can accomplish anything, when we have the blessing of God in what we undertake, as St. Paul affirms of himself, saying, "*I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.*" (*Philip. iv. 13.*) But to whom does God give His blessing and assistance in the way of salvation? To those only who keep His commandments. So we observe in the Gospel, our Saviour, in reply to one who asked Him, "*What good shall I do that I may have life everlasting?*" said, "*If thou wilt enter into life, keep the*

Commandments." (*Matt. xix. 17.*) He would make the same answer to us to-day, were we to ask Him the same question. He would say to us, "*Keep the Commandments of God.*" But it is not enough to keep God's Commandments in any kind of way—we must do so in a proper manner. Hence, nothing can be more important to us than to study and keep before our minds the manner in which we should observe God's holy Commandments.

Behold, then, the subject we have before us—the due and proper observance of the Commandments of God.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL : *Matt. v. 20-24.*

SUBJECT : FRATERNAL CHARITY.

See Programme of Fifth Discourse on the Fifth Commandment, Part II.; also Lesson xviii., Exposition of Christian Doctrine, Part V.

INTRODUCTION.

In this Gospel our Divine Lord speaks of Murder. He also speaks of injurious or abusive language, and He points out how these sins meet with due punishment. He finally requires those, who are at enmity with each other, to be reconciled, saying, that if they come to the altar to make an offering to God, they must leave the offering there, and go to be reconciled, and that it is only then their offering will be accepted. All this shows

the necessity we are under of maintaining fraternal charity with our neighbours in fulfilment of the precept of loving our neighbour as ourselves. We shall therefore take occasion from the Gospel you have heard read, to consider this precept, which our Blessed Lord inculcates so frequently and earnestly in so many passages of the Gospel.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL: *Mark* viii. 1-9.

SUBJECT: SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

See Programme of Second Instruction on the Blessed Eucharist, Part IV.; also Lesson xxvi., Exposition of Christian Doctrine, Part V.

INTRODUCTION.

How wonderful the miracle recorded in this day's Gospel. With seven loaves and a few little fishes our Blessed Lord fed four thousand people, and so abundant was the meal He laid before them, that, having fully satisfied their appetite, they left after them so large a quantity of fragments as to fill seven baskets. This repast, so wonderful in every way, is a lively figure of the heavenly banquet He has provided for all Christians in the mystery of the Blessed Eucharist—a banquet always subsisting in the Church, whereby every day throughout the world, He gives us His adorable Body

and Blood, Soul and Divinity, for the food of our souls. This Divine food comes, as we all know, from the Altar, where it is consecrated during the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We will therefore take occasion to entertain ourselves in making a few reflections on this Divine Mystery, the Sacrifice of the Mass, than which, as the Roman Ritual tells us, "the Church of God has nothing more worthy, more holy, or more wonderful."

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL : *Matt. vii. 15-21.*

SUBJECT : THE PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH IN GENERAL.

See Programmes of Introductory and concluding Instructions on the Precepts of the Church, Part II.

INTRODUCTION.

In this Gospel our Divine Lord tells His Disciples to be on their guard against false Prophets—that is, teachers of error, or persons who in our day are called Proselytizers. He says, these emissaries of Satan are to be known by their fruits, that is their works, in the same way as trees are distinguished from each other, and not by their hypocritical cant, speaking of the Lord and repeating His holy name without authority. What a happiness to be members of the true Church, "*the pillar and ground of truth*," that can teach no error, nor tolerate the teaching of error within her pale. But we

must not deceive ourselves by imagining we are sure of salvation by merely being members of the true Church. Alas! it will be found on the last day, that many Catholics will be told, as well as heretics and others, "*Not every one that saith to me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.*" . . . "*Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity.*" No, it is by no means sufficient for salvation to be members merely of the true Church. We must, moreover, live according to her Laws, and observe her Precepts. We must, as the Apostle exhorts us, "*Walk worthy of God, in all things pleasing; being fruitful in every good work.*" (*Coloss. i. 10.*) Now, to walk worthy of God, to render ourselves pleasing to God in all things, and to be fruitful in every good work, we must live up to the Precepts the Church has instituted for our observance; otherwise, we shall have to abide the terrible sentence pronounced by our Divine Lord Himself, that he who will not hear the Church is to be accounted as a heathen and a publican. We should therefore, as we desire to be saved, take serious account of the Precepts of the Church, that we may regulate our lives in accordance with the duties they prescribe. With this purpose in view, we will, in God's name, consider these Precepts in their general import, in order to see the authority with which they bind our consciences, and, at the same time, the manner in which we are to observe them.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL: *Luke xvi. 1-9.*

SUBJECT : THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

See Programme of Instruction on the Subject, Part II.; also Lesson xviii., Exposition of Christian Doctrine, Part V.

INTRODUCTION.

We see in this Gospel a steward acting dishonestly towards his master, and, at the same time, looking before him, and making friends for himself against the evil day, when he should lose his employment as steward. He did well to look to the future under the circumstances. This foresight in itself was wise and prudent, and our Divine Lord praised him so far as this, showing how in doing so he was more wise and prudent than the children of light. All the time, nevertheless, our Blessed Lord calls him an unjust steward in the several acts of wrong-doing he practised on his master. These various acts come under the head of the Seventh Commandment of God, which our holy religion holds up constantly to our view, that we may observe what it commands, and avoid what it forbids. We will therefore take occasion from the Gospel you have heard read to bestow some reflections on this important Commandment, begging of God beforehand that He will dispose us by His grace to observe it in its various details and particulars, as our great guide in all our dealings with our neighbour in matters of justice and honesty.

Proceed to the subject.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL: *Luke xix. 41-47.*

SUBJECT: DISPENSATION OF GOD'S GRACES.

See Programme of Twenty-sixth Discourse on the Apostles' Creed, Part I.

INTRODUCTION.

This Gospel presents to us a most affecting spectacle, the spectacle of our Divine Lord weeping over Jerusalem, and foretelling the calamities that were to come upon that devoted city. The Jews were God's chosen people—chosen from amongst the rest of mankind ; and God was their God in a special manner. He poured out His graces upon them with unbounded generosity, and they on their side repaid Him with obstinate ingratitude. He bore with them till His bounty and mercy giving way to His justice, He finally rejected them. As a consequence, calamity succeeded calamity, till the fearful predictions in this Gospel were verified to the letter. Their Temple was destroyed, their city demolished, and they themselves were scattered throughout the world, bearing with them everywhere, and to the present day, the effects of that vengeance they provoked by the abuse of God's grace. We consequently see a frightful example in their punishment, the example of the grace of God abused, and of God's vengeance provoked by that abuse. This has happened according to a general rule in the dispensation of God's graces, on which account we

should take serious account of ourselves, and the dispensation of God's graces towards us, that we may turn them to a good account, and not make ourselves liable to the consequences of receiving them in vain. We will, therefore, bestow a few reflections on the subject—the dispensation of God's graces, how he dispenses them, and the obligations they entail upon us. Before entering, however, on this most important subject, let us lift up our hearts on high, and pray, &c. &c.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL : *Luke xviii. 9-14.*

SUBJECT : EIGHTH COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

See Programme of First Discourse on this Commandment, Part II.

INTRODUCTION.

The Parable of this Gospel presents to us two men who went up to the Temple of Jerusalem to pray—one was a proud Pharisee, and the other a humble Publican. Pride always begets contempt for others, and therefore the Pharisee, as he looked at the Publican, felt the most profound contempt for him—a contempt that made him say to God, “*I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, as is this Publican.*” Thus did his pride make him bear false witness against his neighbour. Alas! this is a wide-spread vice amongst mankind, and a vice

that has many branches. We will, therefore, find in it a most practical subject for our instruction, that we restrain our tongues, and our hearts too, from speaking and thinking ill of our neighbour.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL: *Mark vii. 31-37.*

SUBJECT: DISCIPLINE OF THE TONGUE.

See Programme of the Third Discourse on the Eighth Commandment of God, Part II.

INTRODUCTION.

This Gospel gives us an account of how our Divine Saviour by a miracle cured a man that was deaf and dumb, giving him in a moment the faculties of hearing and speaking. When we see a deaf and dumb object, or hear of such an object, we are reminded of what a blessing it is to have the use of our ears to hear and of our tongue to speak. Nevertheless, so prone are we to sin, that we employ both our hearing and speaking—our speaking particularly—in offending God in a variety of ways, so that we earn for ourselves every day the reproach, "*Out of thy own mouth I judge thee, thou wicked servant.*" (*Luke xix. 22.*) What more practical subject can we therefore entertain ourselves upon, as we see the man in the Gospel miraculously given the

use of his tongue, than the discipline we should impose upon our tongue in order to avoid the abuses to which it is so liable.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL : *Luke x. 23-37.*

SUBJECT : CHARITY.

See Programme of Third Discourse on the First Commandment of God, Part II.

INTRODUCTION.

We have the great Commandment of Charity set before us in this day's Gospel, the first and greatest of all God's Commandments, the first and greatest of all virtues. Faith will cease in heaven, because it will give place to actual vision. Hope will cease likewise in heaven, because it will give place to actual enjoyment. But charity will remain for ever. Hence, the Apostle says of these three Divine virtues: "*And now there remain Faith, Hope, Charity, these three; but the greater of these is Charity.*" (1 Cor. xiii. 13.) Let us therefore, with loving hearts, give ourselves to the consideration of this first and greatest of virtues, with a view to its constant exercise, and let us pray God, that, loving and serving Him here on earth, we may see and enjoy Him for ever in heaven.

Proceed to the subject.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL : *Luke xvii. 11-19.*

SUBJECT : MORTAL SIN.

*See Programme of Second Discourse on the Subject,
Part II.*

INTRODUCTION.

We have presented to us in this day's Gospel the miracle wrought by our Divine Lord on ten men affected with the leprosy, whom in His compassion for them He cured and restored to perfect health. The Holy Fathers and spiritual writers regard the disease of leprosy as a figure of sin, because, as leprosy disfigures the body, rendering it offensive and loathsome in the sight of men, so does sin render the soul filthy and abominable in the sight of God and His angels, destroying in it the image of God and producing in its stead the image of Satan. We will, therefore, consider Mortal Sin under this aspect, and entering upon the subject let us beg of God to fill our hearts with such a hatred for sin, that we may always regard it as the greatest misfortune that could befall us, and abhor it as the greatest of all evils.

Proceed to the subject.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL: *Matt. vi. 24-33.*

SUBJECT: GOD, OUR FATHER, PRESIDING OVER, PRESERVING, RULING, AND GOVERNING THE UNIVERSE.

See Programme of Eighth Discourse on the First Article of the Apostles' Creed, Part I.; as also on the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer, Part III.

INTRODUCTION.

We are mere passengers in this world, journeying on towards the world beyond the grave. We have, nevertheless, our wants and necessities in this world. But it would be a great misfortune on that account to allow ourselves to be engrossed with these wants and necessities so as not to make the Kingdom of God and His justice the objects of our first and chief concern. It is against this misfortune our Divine Lord warns us in this day's Gospel, exhorting us to cast all our solicitude on that Bountiful Father, who as a Father presides over the entire Universe, preserving, ruling, and governing all the works of His hands on earth as in heaven. Let us enter into our dear Saviour's views, and that we do so with the greater profit to our souls, let us beg of Him to bestow the grace we stand in need of for our spiritual guidance, in order that we may walk in the way He has traced out for us by His blessed word and example.

Proceed to the subject.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL: *Luke vii. 11-16.*

SUBJECT: THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

See Programme of the Thirty-seventh Discourse of the Apostles' Creed, and Fourth on the Eleventh Article, Part I.

INTRODUCTION.

We behold in this day's Gospel the restoration of a dead man to life. It should remind us of a great mystery that awaits us all. We are all to die like the man in the Gospel, and we are all to come to life again in the General Resurrection. We profess this mystery every time we recite the Creed. It is to be feared, nevertheless, that we do not sufficiently think of it, and therefore we shall spend a few minutes very usefully in considering a subject thrillingly important to us, involving, as it does, the awful question—Shall we rise from the dead to be united with our souls for the mutual enjoyment of eternal bliss, or to share with them a miserable eternity in hell?

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL: *Luke xiv. 1-11.*

SUBJECT: OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH.

See Programme of Discourse on the Third Commandment of God, Part II. Also on the First Precept of the Church, Part II.; and Lessons xvii. and xx., Exposition of Christian Doctrine, Part V.

INTRODUCTION.

The Scribes and Pharisees amongst the Jews were most observant of the Sabbath day. They pushed its observance to an extreme of rigour, like the Pharisees, as we may call them, of the present day. They carried their erroneous ideas so far as to find fault with our Divine Lord as a Sabbath-breaker, because He cured various diseases on the Sabbath day. Our Saviour, however, put them to shame, showing them the absurdity of their rigour, as to how the Sabbath should be observed. We will, therefore, take occasion from His teaching to consider the subject, and see in the light of Faith our obligations as Christians on the Lord's Day.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL : *Matt. xxii. 35-46.*

SUBJECT : THE LOVE OF GOD AND OUR NEIGHBOUR.

See Programmes of Discourses on both, as comprising the Commandments of God in general, Part II.; also Lesson xix., Exposition of Christian Doctrine, Part V.

INTRODUCTION.

In this Gospel our Divine Lord lays before us the two great precepts of loving God and loving our neighbour, and tells us that on them "*dependeth the whole law and the Prophets.*" It is a great happiness to see all our obligations under God's Commandments comprised in two simple precepts—the precepts of loving God and of loving our neighbour. What obligations do we not owe to our Divine Lord for having reduced all our Christian obligations within so narrow a compass? Let us therefore give ourselves earnestly to the study of these two Commandments, with the assurance, as we are told, by our great Teacher Jesus Christ, that, fulfilling them, we shall thereby fulfil the teaching of the law and the prophets, and so attain eternal life.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL: *Matt. ix. 1-8.*

SUBJECT: BLASPHEMY, CURSING, AND PROFANE
SWEARING.

See Programme of Second Discourse on the Second Commandment of God, Part II.; also Lesson xvii. Exposition of Christian Doctrine, Part V.

INTRODUCTION.

This Gospel gives us an account of our Divine Lord exercising His mercy and bounty on a poor man afflicted with palsy, and lying in a bed. He first cured his soul of sin, and then cured his body of the palsy, restoring the poor man to strength and health. When curing his soul He said, "*Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee.*" The Pharisees, who were present, took umbrage at these words, and said within themselves, "*He blasphemeth.*" Our Blessed Lord proved immediately how unjust their accusation was by curing the palsied man. However, the accusation, notwithstanding its injustice, gives us to know, that blasphemy was a sin then amongst mankind, as it is at present, and with it people practised cursing and profane swearing as is so commonly the case in the world even still. These are sins grievously displeasing to God, and at the same time grievously hurtful to the souls of men. We will there-

fore take occasion from the Gospel you have heard to bestow some reflections on them, that we may see their malice, and resolve, with God's grace, to avoid them.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL : *Matt. xxii. 1-14.*

SUBJECT : THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

See Programme on the Thirty-first Discourse on the Apostles' Creed, and Fourth on the Ninth Article. Part I.

INTRODUCTION.

The King in the Parable of this day's Gospel is God Almighty, "*the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.*" The marriage of His Son means the Mystery of the Incarnation, whereby our Divine Saviour became wedded to our human nature by becoming man. The marriage feast signifies the abundance of spiritual blessings our ever bountiful Lord brought with Him into this world, and left to His Church to be one heavenly feast to the faithful to the end of time. This feast we enjoy in the Communion of Saints, and we are all invited to partake of it. Some accept the invitation, others refuse, and not only refuse, but become enemies of God, persecuting His servants, that is, the ministers of religion in their various grades up to the Pope himself. We will be of the number of those who accept this loving

invitation which comes to us from heaven, and we will therefore take a lively interest in considering the Communion of Saints, in which we enjoy "*the good things of the Lord,*" even in this land of exile.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL: John iv. 46-53.

SUBJECT: EXTREME UNCTION, HOLY VIATICUM, AND PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

See Programme of Instruction on the Subject, Part IV.; as also Lesson xxix, Exposition of Christian Doctrine, Part V.

INTRODUCTION.

We behold in this day's Gospel a Ruler, that is a man high in authority, brought low by the dangerous illness of his son. In his affliction he has recourse to our Blessed Lord, who cures the son, though at a distance, and, moreover, bestows the grace of faith on the whole family, whereby they believed in our Divine Lord. It was usual in this way for our heavenly Physician, when asked to cure the body, to cure the soul also of its spiritual disorders, and His conduct in this respect reminds us, that he has left us a Sacrament in His Church to be a remedy at once for our spiritual and bodily diseases. This is the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. We will, therefore, take occasion from the Gospel to bestow some reflections on this salutary

Sacrament, and we will unite with it some observations on the holy Viaticum, and the manner of preparing for death.

A few words to engage attention, a short invocation, and proceed to the subject.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

GOSPEL : *Matt. xviii. 23-35.*

SUBJECT : FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES.

See Programme of Instruction on Fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer, § 6, Part III.; as also of Fifth Discourse on the Fifth Commandment of God, § 2, Part II.

INTRODUCTION.

The Parable of the Gospel you have just heard puts before us in the strongest light the obligation we are under of forgiving each other our mutual offences, as we expect and hope the Almighty will forgive us our offences against His Divine Majesty, which are infinitely greater than any offence a fellow creature can be guilty of in our regard. The Parable, it is true, speaks only of a money debt, but in its scope and design it comprises debts of reparation, which men incur in virtue of any injury they may do their neighbours in person, property, or character. All these debts we are bound to pardon, as we shall see in the reflections we are about to make.

Bespeak attention, a short invocation, and proceed to the subject.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL : *Matt. xxii. 15-21.*

SUBJECT : MAN, HIS CREATION, DIGNITY, AND FALL,
AND THE PROMISE OF A REDEEMER.

See Programme of Discourse on the subject, Part I.

INTRODUCTION.

We see in this Gospel how the Pharisees sought to entrap our Divine Lord into some statement or declaration which would be the ground of an accusation against Him. We see also how He confounded them by His answer : “*Render, therefore, to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.*” This answer He gave as regarded Cæsar, from observing the coin they presented to him, and seeing Cæsar’s inscription and image upon it ; and He added with regard to God, that whereas God has made us to His own image and likeness, and has inscribed Himself, so to say, on our souls, we owe it to His Divine Majesty on that account to give our entire being, body and soul, to His love and service. We will therefore take occasion from the Gospel to bestow some considerations on ourselves, by taking account of our creation and the dignity of our nature, as also of the fall of our first parents and the promise of a Redeemer.

Invite attention, a short invocation, and proceed to the subject.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL : *Matt. ix. 18-26.*

SUBJECT : DEATH OF THE SINNER.

See Programme of Thirty-fifth Discourse on the Apostles' Creed, and Second on the Eleventh Article. Part I.

INTRODUCTION.

The Gospel you have just heard read contains the record of our Divine Redeemer restoring a young maiden to life. He is Master of life and death, and it is always as easy for Him to restore life, when one has died, as it is for Him to give life in the first instance. Nevertheless, except in the case of a miracle, there is no coming back once we shall have entered the house of **our eternity**; if we die a happy death all shall be well, and well for eternity; but if we have the misfortune of dying a bad death, all shall be miserable, and miserable for all eternity. How many poor souls have passed into the other world making a bad death! Oh! if they could come back! Alas! the supposition is impossible. But will not we take a lesson from their sad lot, and provide against a bad death, by thinking on it beforehand, and shaping the conduct of our lives so as to avert so dreadful, and, at the same time, so irreparable a calamity? Let us, then, take occasion from the spectacle of death which the Gospel sets before us, to make some reflections on the death of the sinner,

begging of God to fill our souls with a holy fear on the subject, and grant us the grace of escaping the misfortune of dying a bad death.

Proceed to the subject.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL : *Matt. xxiv. 15-35.*

SUBJECT : PARTICULAR OR GENERAL JUDGMENT. *See First Sunday of Advent.*

See Programmes of Twenty-first and Twenty-second Discourses on the Apostles' Creed.

INTRODUCTION.

This is the last Sunday of the ecclesiastical year. Very appropriately, therefore, does the Church bring before us in her liturgy of to-day that great event, the General Judgment, which is to put an end to this world, and launch mankind into the ocean of eternity. We shall all of us of this generation have passed away long before this event will happen, and our fate for an eternity of weal or woe will have been sealed by the sentence of the Particular Judgment each of us must undergo immediately after death. On this account we will entertain ourselves to-day on the subject of the Particular Judgment, more especially because the Church brings the General Judgment under the consideration of her children again on Sunday next.

Invocation, and proceed to the subject.

FESTIVALS.

THE NATIVITY.

See Programme of Fifteenth Discourse on the Apostles' Creed, and Fifth on the Third Article. Part I.

THE CIRCUMCISION.

See Programme of Sixteenth Discourse on the Apostles' Creed, and Sixth on the Third Article. Part I.

THE EPIPHANY.

See Programme of Seventeenth Discourse on the Apostles' Creed, and Seventh on the Third Article. Part I.

THE ANNUNCIATION.

See Programmes of Eleventh and Twelfth Discourses on the Apostles' Creed, the First and Second on the Third Article. Part I.

HOLY THURSDAY.

See Programmes of Instructions on the Blessed Eucharist, and *select*. Part IV.

GOOD FRIDAY.

See Programme of Eighteenth Discourse on the Apostles' Creed. Part I.

EASTER SUNDAY.

See Programme of Nineteenth Discourse on the Apostles' Creed. Part I.

ASCENSION THURSDAY.

See Programme of Twentieth Discourse on the Apostles' Creed. Part I.

WHIT-SUNDAY.

See Programmes of Discourses on the Holy Ghost, and select. Part I.

CORPUS CHRISTI.

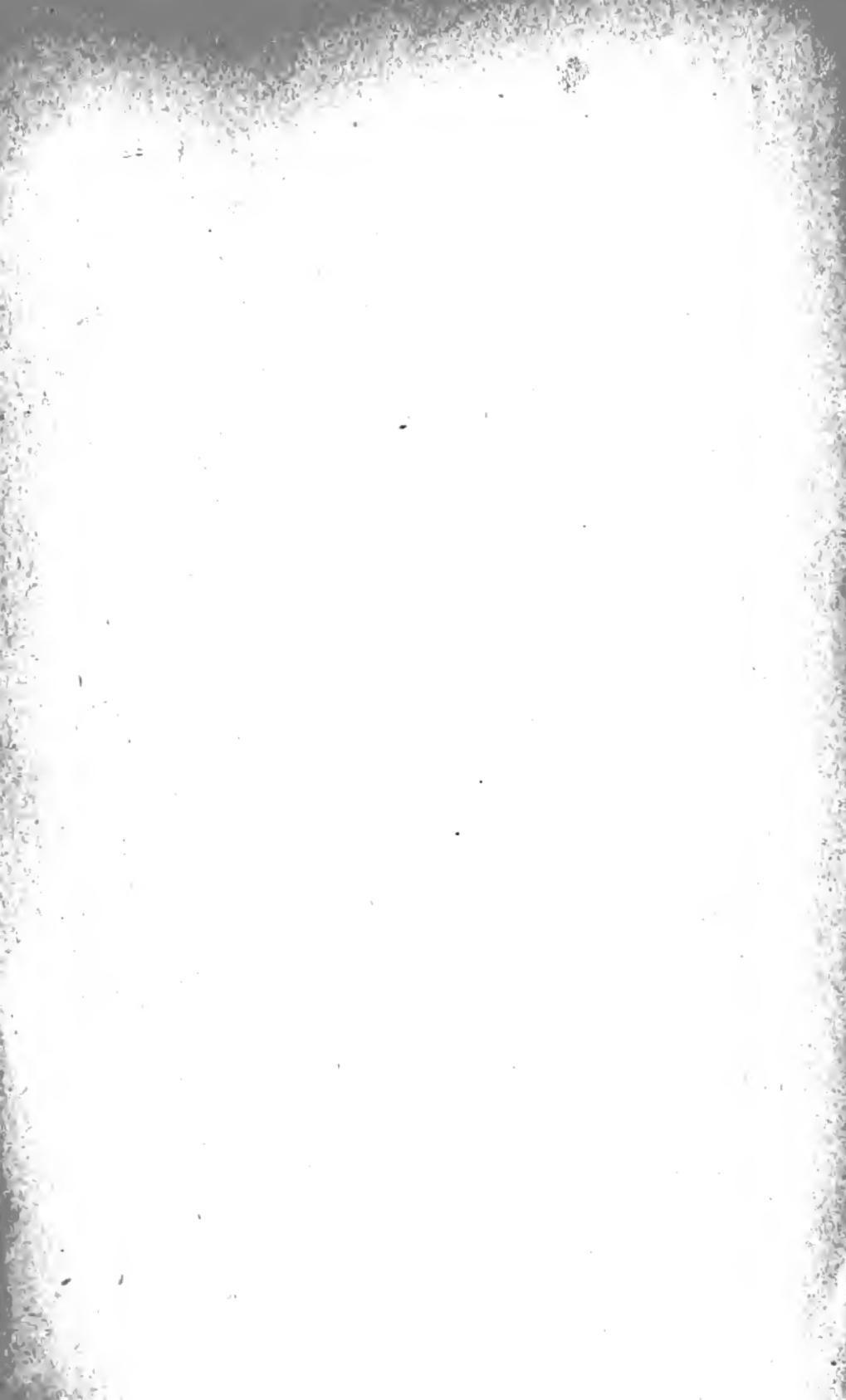
See Programmes of Instructions on the Blessed Eucharist, and select. Part IV.

ALL SAINTS.

See Programme of Instruction on Devotion to the Angels and Saints. Part. III.

ALL SOULS.

See Programme of Forty-first Discourse on the Apostles' Creed. Part I.



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